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SPY

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DEPARTMENTS

GREAT EXPECTATIONS 9

NAKED CITY

► Si Newhouse turns food critic, Donald Trump turns beauty-contest impresario, and James Woods turns insanely jealous. Name-dropping the Jann Wenner way. Interplanetary travel with Laura Dern. Wanted: one replacement Wilbury—must play guitar, have hair and be washed up; M.C. Hammer need not apply. Plus: flacking for the Fatherland! 26

PARTY POOP 88



FEATURES

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A SEVEN-FOOT-TALL, LARGE-HEADED, ANTHROPOMORPHIC DANCING ANIMAL

► Who says America lacks a native theatrical art form? After all, we have the Phillie Phanatic, Big Bird, Bucky the Badger and literally hundreds of other mascots and furry characters around the country. NED ZEMAN reports on *our* Kabuki. Plus: JOHN BRODIE goes undercover to learn about life as viewed through an air hole 50

BLEAK HOUSE 1990

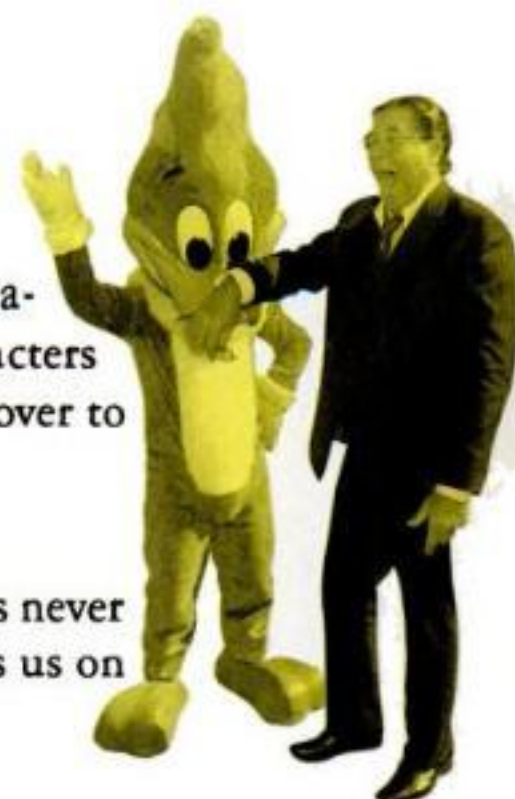
► New York seems especially wretched now—but there's a silver lining: the city has never more closely resembled the squalid Victorian London of *Oliver Twist*! BRUCE HANDY takes us on a guided tour of Dinkinsian—sorry, *Dickensian*—New York 60

BONFIRE OF THE VAN O' T'S

► ED ZUCKERMAN chronicles the unlikely alliance between a blue-blooded Wall Street investment firm and a Texas-based T-shirt merchandiser whose lovable hillbilly CEOs drink hard, talk dumb and travel from deal to deal in a splashed-out RV they call the Banana 66

PULL THE CHAIN

► The pillars of American business, entertainment and journalism have lately clogged the postal system with a massive celebrity chain letter. AIMÉE BELL and JOSH GILLETTE traced it and discovered a Who's Who of pseudosuperstitious VIPs—from Ben Bradlee to Mrs. Johnny Carson! 74



COLUMNS

► The continuing saga of Judith Miller, courtesy of J. J. HUNSECKER, in **The Times**; CELIA BRADY details the Paramount shake-up in **The Industry**; TODD STILES probes the decision to publish the most repulsive yet of Bret Easton Ellis's awful **Books**; and in **The Webs**, LAUREEN HOBBS introduces us to the latest chief at CBS News 43

► HUMPHREY GREDDON deconstructs the musings of Monsieur Richard Bernstein of *Le New York Times* in **Review of Reviewers**; in **The Reds**, ANNE WILLIAMSON tails the international entrepreneur who made a killing off *The Russia House*; and in **The Big Picture**, EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN explains the government's \$6 trillion boner 80

OUR UN-BRITISH CROSSWORD PUZZLE

► BY ROY BLOUNT JR. 86

THE SPY INDEX 90



THE COVER
Joan Rivers photographed
by Chris Collis. (Further
information on page 86.)
Mascot costume © 1990
The Phillies.

1990

CONTENTS

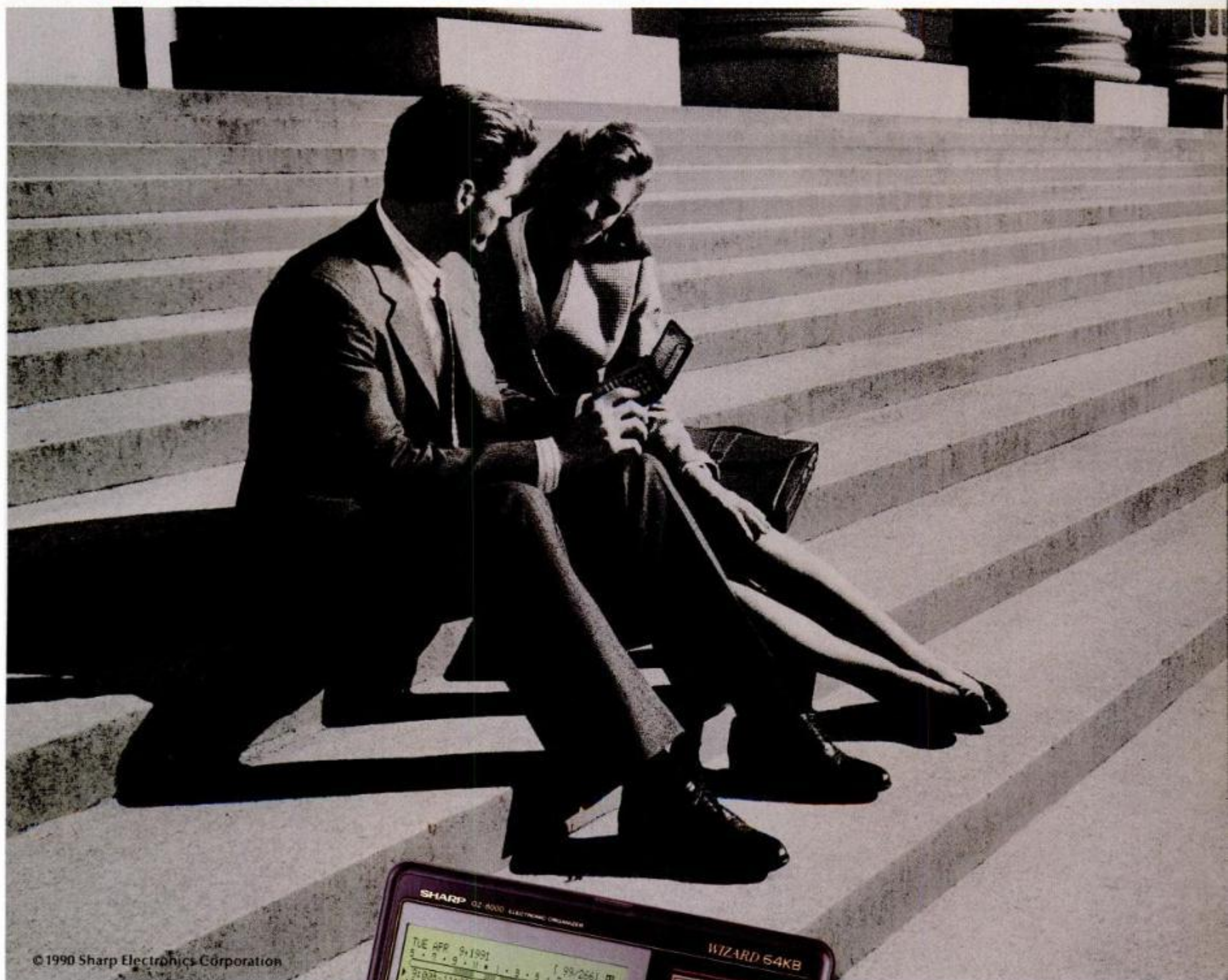
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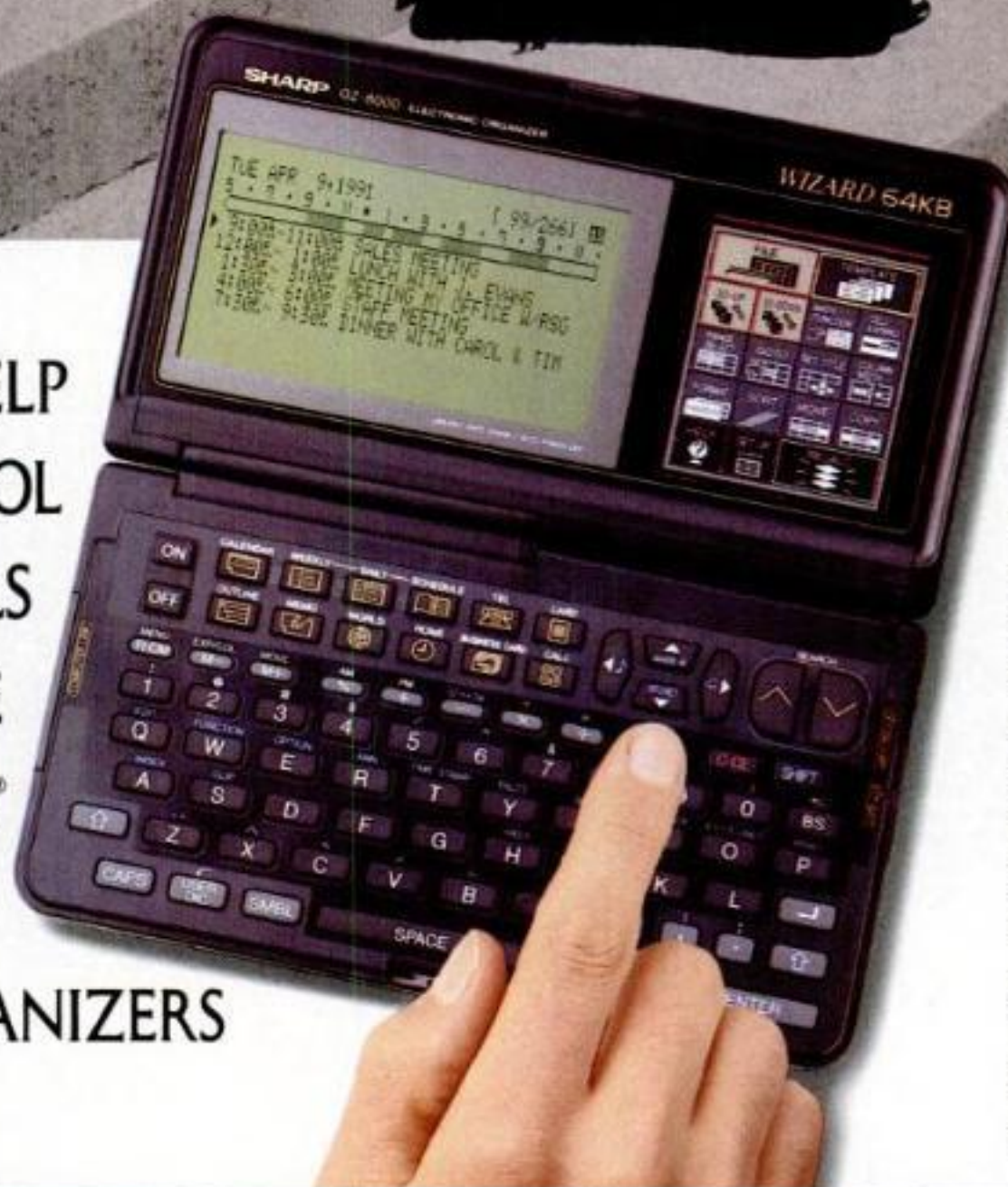
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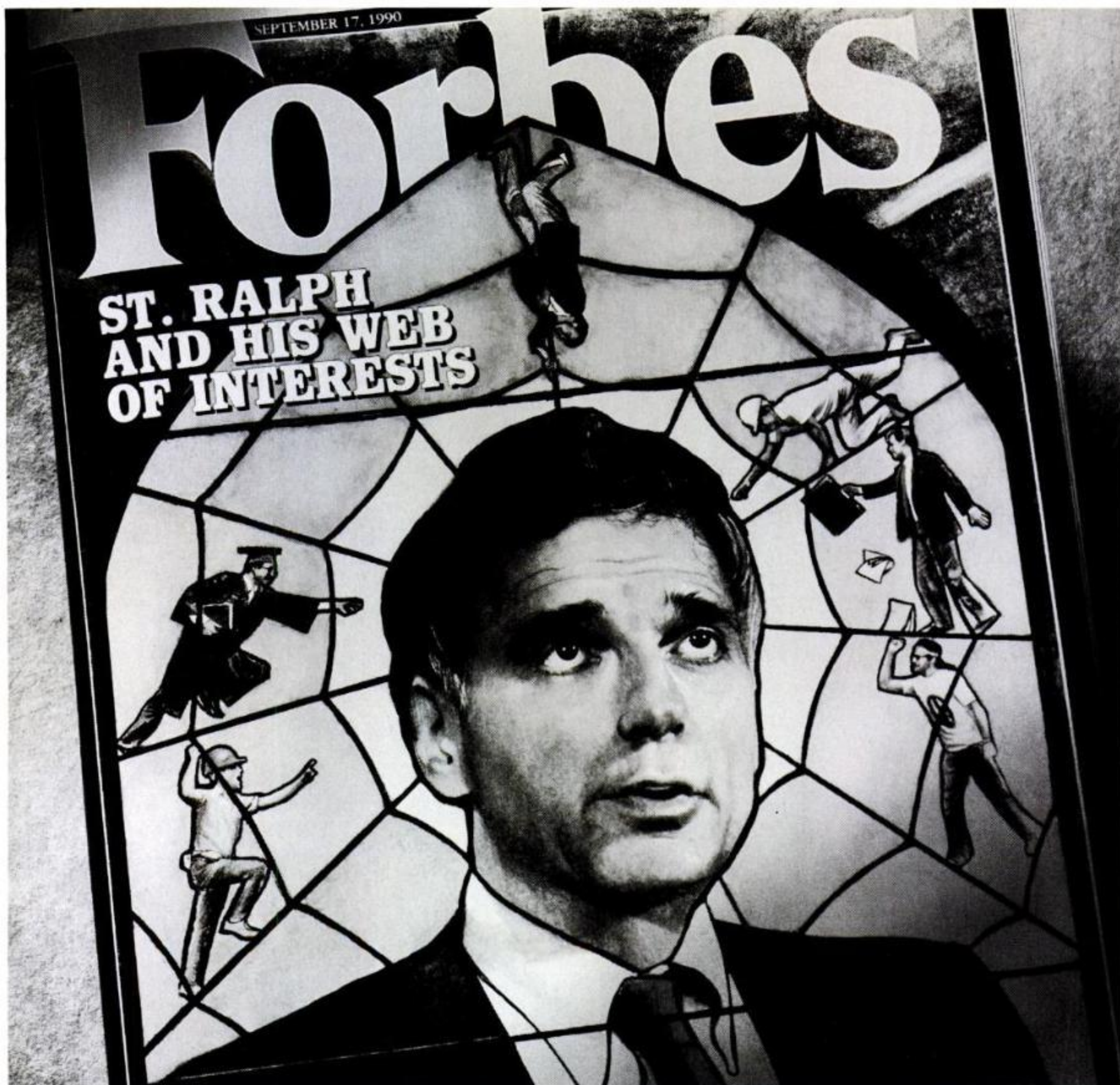
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Forbes raids Nader.

The public knows Ralph Nader and his raiders for attacking private interests to protect the consumer. But Forbes, believing there's more to the man and his activities than meets the eye, recently performed a Nader-type raid on Nader.

In our September 17th cover story, we reveal the real Ralph Nader as a far more secretive, contradictory figure than the one most people know. This self-appointed consumer crusader may be, in fact, a prophet of paranoia whose campaigns have cost the public dearly.

His dealings with powerful interest groups raise serious questions about his credibility. Take, for instance, his back-scratching compromise with powerful plaintiff attorneys in 1988. When he risked his all-important credibility for their big bucks. Which leads one to question whether Nader is the selfless vigilante of consumerism he appears to be or a hypocrite. Especially when you consider that he's used his powerful pulpit to preach

against big business, while at the same time building a personal, politically potent empire that controls over 29 organizations.

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speaking recently about his eldest child, who turns 13 this month



THIS IS THE FIRST DECEMBER IN YEARS AND YEARS that the holiday wish *Peace on earth* has seemed something better than tinny Hallmark boilerplate, the naive or cynical UN version of

Have a nice day. We have now actually experienced peace on earth, more or less, for the several minutes following the Soviet Union's surrender and preceding the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. But if it isn't precisely peace we're living through currently, at least geopolitics has reverted to an elegiac, retro mode: a despot's grab for Lebensraum; an Ivy League clubman president's preparations for war, alongside his no-nonsense British counterpart; U.S. troops kissing loved ones goodbye; an anxious waiting game somewhere in the sands beyond the Levant. This is the first December in years and years that *It's a Wonderful Life* can be watched in the appropriate context. The world has been de-colored. But the 1990s will not, unfortunately, be a simple matter of reliving the 1940s — low-interest mortgage loans to returning GIs, low-interest loans to rebuild Baghdad, falling out of love with Moscow again. No, despite the current happy twitches of American Century self-satisfaction (we may be just beginning to understand the phenomenon of martini flashbacks), the U.S. is not undergoing a renaissance; Washington is,



This is the first December

in fact, be- coming like *modern* Italy — chaotic and craven and simply unable to snap out of it. The collapse of the federal government this fall was, how you say, *una atrocità*. It was as if the entire nation had its American Express card revoked. Even before that mortifying moment, the Air Force had admitted it was already out of the vigilantly-defending-against-a-UFO-attack business. "We don't even take reports anymore," said Captain Sigmund Adams, "even if you said a flying saucer just landed in your yard." With America open to extraterrestrial invasion — practically asking for it — it's no wonder Republicans such as Sonny Bono ("If I made a move, I would decide for the Senate") and David Duke (a solid majority of white Louisianans wanted him in the U.S. Senate) are itching to put things right in Washington.



"I have a son, Donny, who's in the 11-to-12 category." — Donald Trump,



One of Bono's and Duke's prospective GOP Senate colleagues, Charles Grassley of Iowa, was explaining the rigorous process by which presidential appointees are scrutinized by the Senate. "If this guy doesn't say too much," Grassley correctly predicted just before David Souter was made a Supreme Court justice, "he'll probably be confirmed. It sounds facetious, but there's some truth to it."

If Dan Quayle doesn't say too much, he'll probably be allowed to remain vice president during George Bush's second term. Happily, however, Quayle's handlers have decided two years of enforced silence is enough, and they've been putting him on TV, live and unrehearsed. He went on *Nightline* to explain the Persian Gulf and his own place in the national political consciousness. "The American people," he said, "do not spend a lot of time thinking about their vice president." As we like to say, *It sounds facetious, but there's some truth to it.*

The Iraqi people, evidently, are spending time thinking about our former vice president. "*Bush bosh! Bush bosh!*" is the extremely catchy slogan chanted by the crowds outside the U.S. embassy in Baghdad. The words mean "Bush is nothing," and while we don't entirely agree—a twist and a flip-flopper, sure, but *nothing?*—we nevertheless admire any mob that screams in alliterative spondees. As soon as we finish our Christmas shopping, we intend to take a taxi over to the Iraqi consulate and gather some like-minded pedestrians, all of us screaming *Goddamn Saddam! Goddamn Saddam!*

That would be a little unfair, though, since our military adventure in Saudi Arabia is actually showing a profit: we have been charging the various sheiks and former Axis powers whose dirty work we've been doing more than \$1 billion a month, a price that not only covers our overhead but includes a fairly comfortable markup. At this rate, if the war lasts for, say, 300 years, we'll have the federal deficit licked—and no new taxes. It sounds facetious, but there's some truth to it.

There is some truth to the idea that

we should be paying more attention to the former Axis power that just became a strong, new jumbo-size nation. The official U.S. nonchalance seems willfully la-di-da, like a teenager steering Dad's car with his elbows. The German thing? "I'm pretty relaxed about it," an unnamed high official who sounded an awful lot like James Baker told the *Times*. "We have some people looking at it." One of the people looking at it, a Germany specialist in the State Department, said they'd had nothing but bull sessions on the of German reunification history taking a sudden turn? *Love to hear your take on that, really would, but the Mosbachers were expecting us for drinks at—oh, golly!—6:30.*

The State Department may be feckless, but over at the Pentagon they're men of action. According to the commander of the Navy's surface Atlantic fleet, lesbian sailors are "hardworking, career-oriented, willing to put in long hours on the job and among the command's top performers." Moreover, the commander concluded, they must be rooted out and discharged. Yes, it sounds facetious, but it's true.

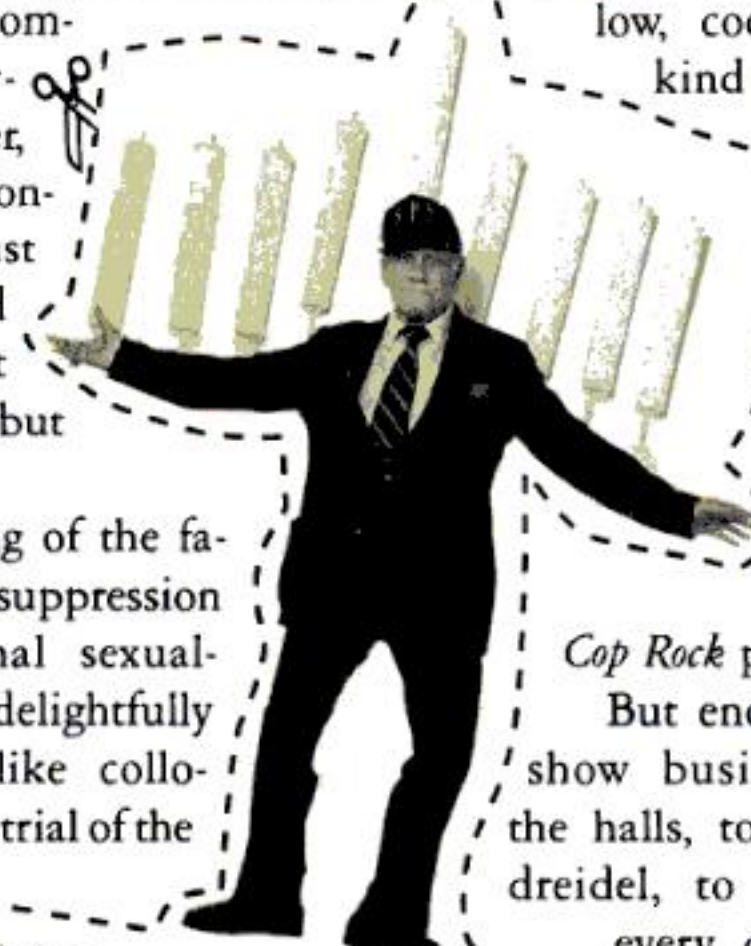
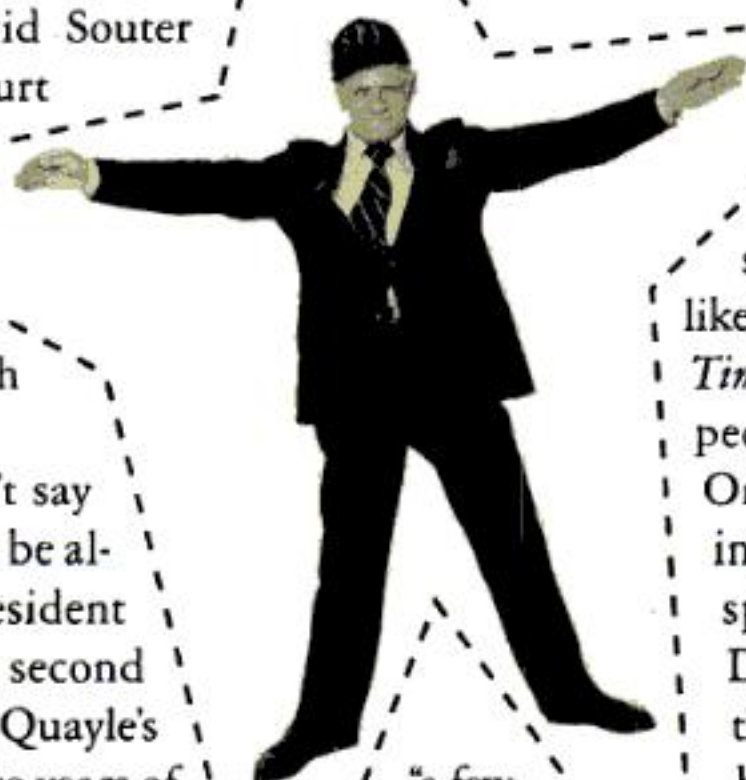
And—speaking of the facetious-sounding suppression of unconventional sexuality—so did the delightfully Tom Stoppard-like colloquies heard at the trial of the Cincinnati museum director who exhibited Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs. A prospective juror confessed to the prosecutor that his son "does paintings from *National Geographic*." The D.A. seemed alarmed. "Did he paint any nudes out of *National Geo-*

graphic?" "No," the would-be juror replied. Later the woman who had curated the show took the witness stand. "What are the formal values of the picture where the finger is inserted in the penis?" the prosecutor asked her. "It's a central image," she answered with a straight face, "very symmetrical, a very ordered, classical composition." *That's* entertainment.

And these, we are regularly reminded, are the nineties—you know, the giving, caring but also violent and racially polarized nineties. "Yes, Michael," soon-to-be billionaire music mogul David Geffen said into a telephone receiver in the presence of a *Wall Street Journal* reporter, "I love you, too." The reporter asked whom Geffen was talking to. "Michael Jackson," he said. At almost the same moment, Pillsbury was introducing its new advertising campaign featuring the cute, slick, 25-year-old, high-pitched-voiced, bleached-white, video-created, almost-human-seeming Pillsbury Doughboy pretending to play a guitar and singing rap songs.

And then Yusef Salaam, the most visually interesting of the convicted Central-Park-jogger rapists, appeared at his sentencing to perform a rap song of his own composition for the judge. "I'm a smooth type of fellow, cool, calm and mellow./I'm kind of laid back but now I'm speaking/So that you know I got used and abused,/And even was put on the news." In the audience, his supporters swayed to the rhythm. Salaam promptly copyrighted his song. And shortly afterward, *Cop Rock* premiered.

But enough talk of mayhem and show business—it's time to deck the halls, to sip eggnog, to spin the dreidel, to visit the cash machine every day instead of just twice a week. In that spirit, we present, at left, the SPY 1990 Holiday Home Decorating Pak, featuring Walter Monheit.TM Happy holidays! Peace on earth! (Coming from us, we know, it sounds facetious; but there's some truth to it.)



1990 Holiday Home Decorating Pak



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In order to reconstitute the elaborate, serpentine workings of the chain letter featured in this issue, **AIMÉE BELL** and **JOSH GILLETTE** were forced to find increasingly large pieces of paper to keep their notes on. For several weeks early this fall, Bell's and Gillette's desks were draped with a 13-foot-long piece of brown butcher paper—it was as if Christo had come to the SPY offices and died mid-project. Bell worked on the 1990 SPY 100; Gillette offered career counseling to Richard Nixon and Marla Maples last month.



Features editor **BRUCE HANDY** writes in this issue about how New York City itself has turned into a real, live Dickens novel; in earlier issues, he has written about expensive consumer products as yuppie porn and created our ground-breaking "Guide to Postmodern Everything." Handy's interviews

CONTRIBUTORS

with the clients of public-relations man Michael Levine—Handy has spoken to five of Levine's 200 or so clients and associates and plans to talk to them all—are to SPY readers what nonsausage meats are to Soviet consumers.



As if being one of the premier business writers of our time weren't distinction enough, contributing editor **EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN** owns what he believes to be the only photograph of the Warren Commission autographed by all its members, including *Hale Boggs*. Epstein wrote about movie mogul Giancarlo Piretti in our June issue, and his semiregular column, *The Big Picture*, debuts this month.



NED ZEMAN is the Robert De Niro of our contributing editors: in researching his story about American Kabuki in this issue, he wore a mascot head (Hugo the Hornet's); while reporting his story about cryonics last year, he touched a frozen, "deanimated" person. All plans for Zeman to work on a story about rat-bite fever have been abandoned. When not wearing decorative headgear or touching dead people, he works as an associate editor at *Newsweek*. ☛

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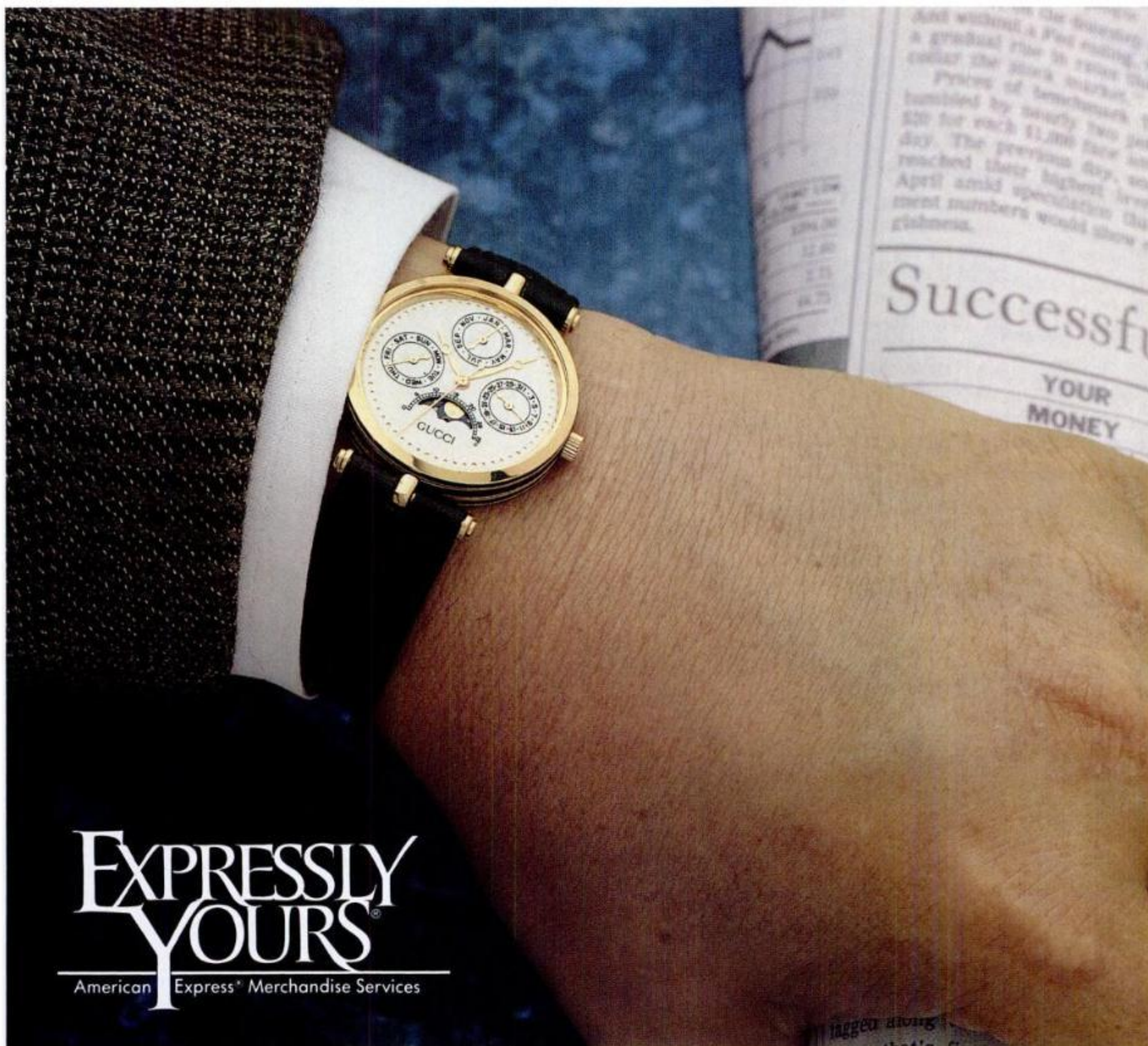
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DEAR EDITORS **Y**our article "Conspiracy? Perhaps" [by George Kalogerakis, July] was irresponsible and unfair.

Granted, a paranoid mind sees conspiracy where there is none. But that in no way means that those who study covert operations are paranoid. The implication of the article is that independent voices are unworthy of attention. What a dangerous idea!

Watergate would never have come to light without the single-mindedness of Woodward and Bernstein. The Iran-contra scandal went completely unreported in this country until a newspaper in Lebanon began to spotlight the story. As your article acknowledges ever so briefly, what seems laughable on Monday has often forced a resignation by Friday.

Yeah, it's preferable to believe that JFK was killed by Lee Harvey Oswald and that James Earl Ray shot Martin Luther King Jr. Yeah, it would be nice to think that politicians never lie and that *The Washington Post* is omniscient and immune to political pressures. But the official stories in both cases were fairy tales—as was admitted by the House Select Committee on Assassinations when it delivered its report more than ten years ago. In both cases, most of the new information was ferreted out not by the government's staff but by courageous individuals whom SPY would deride.

If you're looking for laughs, turn your attention to the ludicrous claims our government shoves down our throats

this article culminates a drift from intelligent wit to sophomoric put-downs.

The author's reference to the "supposed plot to delay the release of American hostages in Iran" before the 1980 election ("October Surprise") highlights his ignorance of facts. I refer you to the *Oregonian* of Monday, May 7, 1990, detailing a Portland federal court jury's verdict establishing the "October Surprise" scenario as factual, including the participation of George Bush and William Casey in said meetings in Paris with Iranian officials. Also unacknowledged is the latest conspiracy reported by the *Houston Post* in a ten-part series by Pete Brewton, detailing how the CIA pilfered at least 25 S&Ls throughout the country and contributed, along with their Mafia cohorts, to the current S&L debacle. Apparently they have projects in mind for which no one will supply them legitimate funds.

The point is, many mainstream publications yield an impressive array of details about proven political conspiracies of our time. Dave Emory, Mae Brussell and other responsible political theorists' sources are always listed, with *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* high on the list—facts conveniently omitted by Kalogerakis, who paints the typical sensationalist picture of these people.

Including this article in your magazine has done a genuine disservice to all Americans who take politics and power-elitism seriously. You have furthered the cause of complacency and done nothing to encourage debate and research on im-

portant issues of our time.

Mark D. Boyle
Santa Cruz, California

DEAR EDITORS **I** plead guilty to writing in the first person about a phantom case of herpes ["No Pain, No Story: The Strange Vogue for Personal-Injury Journalism," by Elizabeth Royte and John Tayman, August], but you don't know the half of it. I've also written in the first person about quitting smoking; designing and building my own house; buying a bicycle; wearing a cowboy hat; the 25 cars I'd owned, loved and hated; splitting the year between two houses (*before* a divorce); living in a single room (*after* the

The holidays are approaching, and normally we'd have already driven ourselves half mad with anticipation of the gifts they bring, especially those wonderful selections of jams. But this year, the economy being what it is, we can't

FROM THE



MAILROOM

expect much. Nevertheless, our heartfelt thanks to Judy Lynch of Charlestown, Massachusetts, and to Anita Miller of Maple-

wood, New Jersey, for the lovely photos of jams they sent us. (Presumably you two snipped these out of the catalog yourselves? That's nice.) We're not being charitable, are we? We know you meant only to draw our attention to the jam's very topical flavor, "Marionberry." But we prefer to see it this way: that two readers—strangers—thought to send us, well, not *technically* jam but a reasonable, inexpensive facsimile. Thank you! The clips of the photos of the jam jars are affixed to our refrigerator with magnets. Okay, not magnets exactly—small loops of tape. Things are tough all over.

Had someone asked in 1986 what we hoped to achieve with SPY, we would have replied unhesitatingly, "To become a clearinghouse of information for Scandinavia's Silja cruise-ship line—no more, no less." And we have. In our offices high above Union Square, two full-time workers now handle the flow of things Silja-related—remarkable, considering that the whole Silja saga is mailroom-specific and relates not at all to any article that has ever appeared in SPY. The latest item: a photo of the Silja terminal in Turku Åbo, Finland, sent by Michael Khoo of Decatur, Alabama. Thanks. We know we can look forward, in the years ahead, to the reminiscences of other Silja passengers.

David Levine of Jackson Heights has sent us what he describes as a "highly parochial" example of Log-rolling in Our Time. Scan the table of contents of the Summer 1990 issue of *Judaism: A Quarterly Journal* and you'll see just two essays listed in its Reviews section: a David Biale review of a new book by Arnold Eisen, and an Arnold Eisen review of a new book ▶

LETTERS TO SPY

every day. Missile gaps, windows of vulnerability, Commies at the border and trickle-down effects ought to be your real targets, not private citizens struggling to examine how it is they came to live in a democracy in which individuals no longer have any real power.

Bob Harris
Washington, D.C.

DEAR EDITORS **I** am not given to writing letters to the editor; however, I was taken aback at your recent article about political conspiracy theorists. Such an obviously condescending trivialization of an important subject hardly does credit to your magazine. I have read SPY for several years now, and

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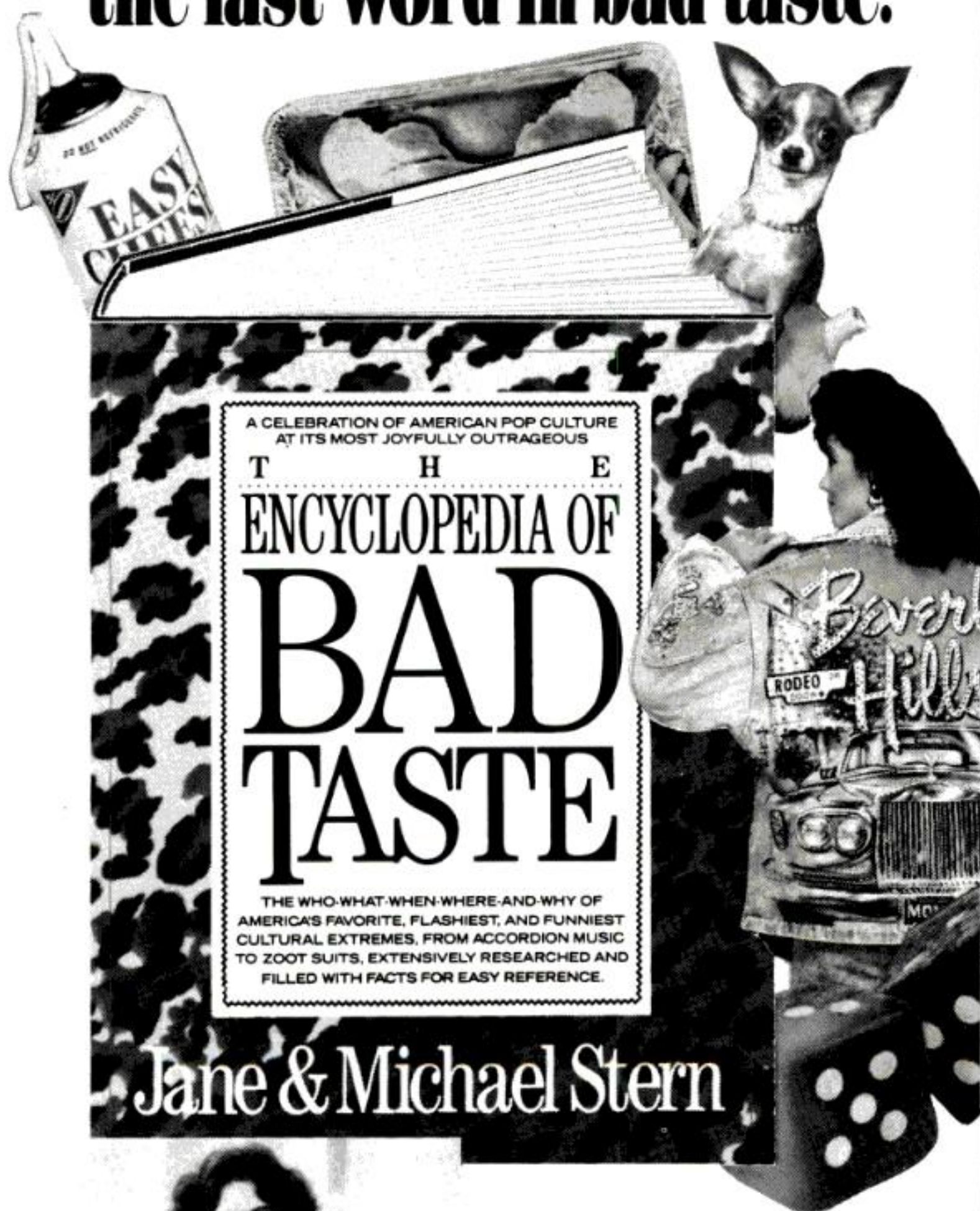
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Jane and Michael Stern are the last word in bad taste.



If the encyclopedia were a painting, it would be on black velvet. Framed in plastic gilt. Backlit by a lava lamp. Admired by a guy in a short-sleeved leisure suit (royal blue with white top-stitching). Eating a savory dish of J-E-L-L-O.

You get the picture, and if you don't, there are over 300 color and black-and-white illustrations in this witty, comprehensive tribute to American kitsch. *The New York Times Magazine* says of the authors, "[As] cultural anthropologists, the Sterns have no peers." Syndicated columnists and bestselling authors of books including *Elvis World* and *Road Food*, Jane and Michael Stern are today's arbiters of the tacky, the glitzy, the outré. **And darned proud of it.**

A Selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club

 HarperCollins Publishers

divorce; I never wrote about the divorce — we coddled, self-obsessed megalomaniacs have our limits); being burglarized; my search for the perfect dog; my search for the perfect '65 Mustang convertible; getting in shape for 40; and falling in love with a manatee. And you missed my greatest hit: on (accidentally) knocking a hole in my head with a pickax — in the *Times's* About Men, naturally.

I did write these, and I will again when I think it the best way to illuminate some aspect of how we live now. In my partial list of topics, the perceptive reader may note a subtext that I won't insult your intelligence by elucidating. You may also detect a touch of irony.

Recently, though, when I sat down to write about why I gave up the dog, nothing happened. So maybe that period is over. But I make no promises. I might even try a piece on why writers write about themselves — or, better yet, why magazine writers write about other magazine writers who write about themselves. When Willie and Waylon started singing about each other instead of about life, I stopped listening to country music.

Jack McClintock
Miami, Florida

DEAR EDITORS I enjoy your features on the peculiar ways of foreigners for the benefit of Americans traveling abroad. But you tend to ignore the smaller countries, whose languages tend not to be taught in American high schools and whose habits thus often remain a mystery. With this in mind, I humbly offer up a Swedish supplement to your "Pronunciation Gazetteer for the World Traveler" [*Pardonnez-Moi, Où Est un Parisien Avec Humanité ou Compassion?*, by Henry Alford, August].

Look at all the concrete!
TIT-ab so MUU-kay bay-TONG!

You conceal your raging inner pain remarkably well.

NEE er SHICK-lig pob aht YOEM-mah er RAHS-and-eh IN-reb ONG-est.

Darvyn Spagnolly
Oakland, California

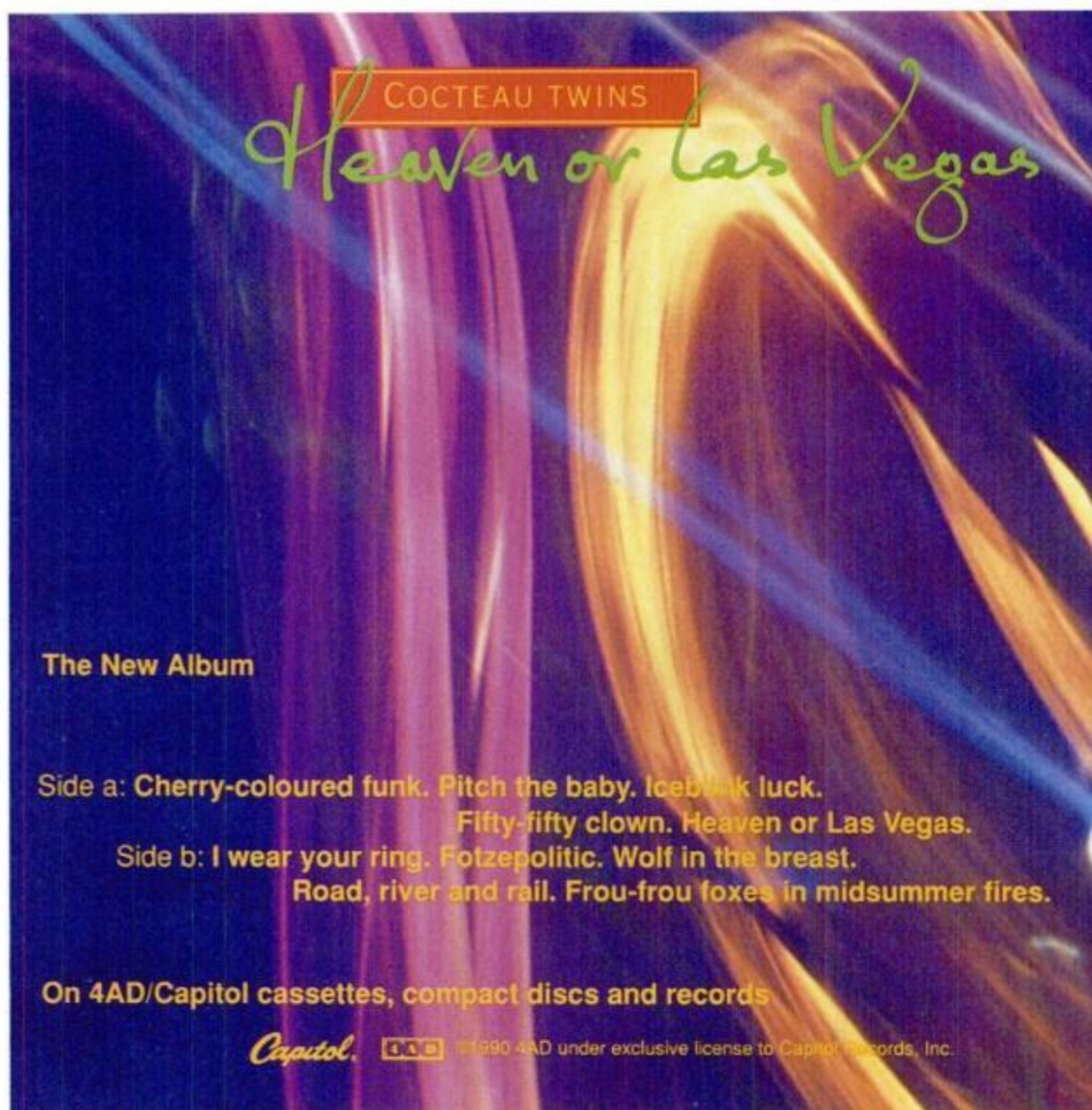
DEAR EDITORS I'd like to point out an error in your Pronunciation Gazetteer. The German phrase given for "Our valuables have been

by David Biale. We are not looking at two pans here. Biale found Eisen's *Galut: Modern Jewish Reflection on Homelessness and Homecoming* "timely and eloquently written," while Eisen called Biale's *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* a "fine meditation... [a] thoughtful book." Let their spirit of cooperation be a lesson to us all.

I-Am-Just-a-Little-Boy-Looking-for-a-Little-Girl-to-Love Department: The pathologically gal-chasing movie director James Toback is still at large (see "The Pickup Artist's Guide to Picking Up Women," by Vincenza Demetz, March 1989, and this column, May 1990). SPY has recently heard from two more women who say they have bumped into him. The first says she was approached on Second Avenue. Toback declared himself "hypnotized" by her beauty. "He told me he was a director, then he took out his Directors Guild card and kept telling me he was a director," she remembers. "But what I thought was so funny was the movies he listed—*Exposed* and *The Pick-Up Artist*. He kept saying, 'Rent them. You'll see I'm legitimate.' I thought the whole thing was funny, but I found him completely revolting." She adds ruefully, "He's offered to take other people to the Harvard Club, but he only offered to take me to Cosy's." Cosy's, it turns out, is a modest Chinese restaurant on Amsterdam Avenue at 81st Street. As we said, things are tough all over.

One of this woman's friends has her own Toback story. "He's so gross it is disgusting," she says. "It was two years ago, and he followed me onto a bus. I was new to New York and gullible, and since I want to be an actress, I kind of fell for the line. He took me up to his apartment, but then he started getting so weird. He started talking about sex and said he needed to know my sex life. Then he told me that as a young boy he slept with [an older composer]. I fled as soon as I could get out of there. He kept saying, 'I can help you. We're on a mission.' He's so weird and sleazy and disgusting."

With an eye to saving space and improving general mailroom-column efficiency, we are hereby putting out an all-points bulletin for anyone who has had a similar encounter with ▶



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stolen" actually means "Our valuables are stolen." The hapless traveler using your guide would be announcing that his valuables were hot.

There's a grammatical error as well—the proper inflectional ending on the word *unsere* is missing. Are the other foreign phrases just as precise?

Tom Ace

San Francisco, California

Oh, tais-toi.

DEAR EDITORS **Y**our article "There's a Make-believe Fly in My Soup" [by David Adam, August], in which you sent phony complaints to various companies about their products, disturbed me. The letter from Harrods regarding your allegations of a "chemically flavored, crumbly textured" Christmas pudding told of how they had gone so far as to notify the pudding baker!

An image of a flour-dusted old Italian baker in the back streets of Knightsbridge fills my mind; the manager of Harrods Food Hall bursts into his tiny, overheated shop, brandishing the letter of complaint, and informs the sad little man that both his services and his puddings will no longer be required.

What you seem to have overlooked in your quest for humor is that butts could be resoundingly kicked over complaints such as these. Visions of quality-control managers committing culinary hara-kiri with jagged shards of Kikkoman soy-sauce bottles also danced in my head.

Andrew Dawson

New York

You have a vivid imagination, Andrew. For the record, the companies were subsequently notified that the letters were gags.

DEAR EDITORS **D**avid Adam's "There's a Make-believe Fly in My Soup" could have been authenticated had you just polled your readers for actual experiences. How does a big, nasty-looking wad of masking tape at the bottom of a bag of Doritos (1980), a stone very much resembling a lentil in a box of Near East Lentil Pilaf (1984), or a dehydrated mosquito (miraculously bloated to its original size and shape once hot water was added) in a package of Alba 66 cocoa (1977) sound? These are just a few of the food mishaps that have hap-

James Toback aboard one of the ships of the Silja Line.

"Frantic Fran" Lilienfeld (75; resident of New Jersey; star of the Borscht Belt and public-access TV) continues to write us every ten minutes or so. A recent packet included a business card (FRANTIC FRAN, TOTAL WOMAN. BIBLE READINGS—DIRTY JOKES—PIANO AND SONGS—PERSONAL EXPERIENCES), a black-and-white photograph of a Fink Bread truck stuck in city traffic, a schedule of her upcoming appearances, a few typewritten pages' worth of reflections on the American education system, and some jokes ("My psychiatrist is so pleased with me, he's letting me sit up"). Quick, somebody hire her.

Congratulations to Harry Shearer on his recent Chabad Telethon invitation (see "Life After Jerry," September 1988). "Dear Mr. Shearer," went the official notification, "Congratulations! Due to your prominence in the field of entertainment and your dedication to help those in need, we the producers of the Chabad 'L'Chaim—To Life!' Telethon have chosen you (with Telethon chairman Jerry Weintraub's blessing) to appear on our telecast.... We await the return of your form with baited [sic] breath.... And, once again, congratulations!" And just once more: congratulations!

Congratulations are only part of what George Spota of L.A. sent along to us, so moved was he by Jim Collins's "What Passes for Friendship Today" (September). Spota also included what looks suspiciously like a poem: "Where have all the/Yesterdays/Of the handshake/Gone?/They are waiting with/Sparrows and robins/For the green fields/And clean waters/To come back." Thank goodness. Like Jim, we in the mailroom had wondered.

In Donald Trump news (how the vulgar have fallen—from full-length features to passing mentions), Dan McFaddin of Miramar, Florida, received an inspirational booklet in one of his pay envelopes this past summer. The booklet, entitled "You Create Quality," contained this motivational career summation from the short-fingered one: "Deliver the goods. You can't con people, at least not for long. You can create excitement, you can do won- ▶

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Space (and a fervent desire not to ap-
pear immodest) prohibits a long discus-
sion of SPY's ongoing pervasive influence
throughout journalism and publishing,
but we'd like to thank all the readers
who continue to detect SPYish touches
here and there. Among the stuff they've
clipped and sent: a Drew Friedman-
esque cartoon and Fine Print-ish exami-
nation of a musician's contract rider
from the *Cleveland Edition*; *The New
York Times*'s supposedly SPY-like articles
on summer-film body counts and on ball-
park food (Shea Stadium vs. Yankee Sta-
dium); a *Harper's* piece on the last sup-
pers of death-row inmates (see "Eat
Burritos, Drink Milk and Be Merry, For
Tomorrow We Die," August 1989); an
entry in the Lands' End catalog that
compared a turtleneck sweater and a
turtle's neck; a very-familiar-looking lay-
out from the *Los Angeles Times*'s weekly
TV section; a backward-looking horo-
scope in the *Victoria, B.C., Monday
Magazine* and a pretty good anagram
(ROBERTSON DAVIES = READ IT OVER,
SNOBS) in *The Province of Vancouver*,
B.C.; and a weird hybrid of the SPY chart
and "Separated at Birth?" in *Hoboken's
Hudson Review* (the story compares Indi-
an movie idol Amitabh Bachchan to Elvis
Presley). Of course, there've been a slew
of "Separated at Birth?" knockoffs: a
two-part article called "Ganmen Sojikei"
("Similar Faces") from Japan's *Shukan
Bunshun* magazine; a trio of faces in the
Des Moines Register (caption: "Is it just
me, or do these guys look alike?"); one
called "Divided at Delivery?" from San
Francisco's *Sentinel*; "Separated at
Rollout?" ("The F-117A Stealth Fight-
er...and Darth Vader?") from *Air &
Space*, which at least offered its "apolo-
gies" to SPY; and a series of pairs in *The
Washington Post*.

We're not saying these are *all* trade-
mark infringements and unconscionable
plagiarisms. (And it does work both
ways. B. Shawn Huckaby of Boulder
points out that "There's a Make-believe
Fly in My Soup" [August] "seems to owe
at least its inspiration to Don Novello's
The Lazlo Letters.")

Two proposals regarding The SPY

Index. Laura E. Pinto of Windsor, On-
tario, dangerously suggests it should in-
clude names of readers who appear in
this column or in Letters to SPY. And
Michael White of San Francisco fumes,
"For the second time in the last 12
months, Stella Stevens has appeared in
your magazine with no reference to her
in your index....I am shocked by this
oversight." Fair enough. But we're
afraid that of the three of you—Pinto,
White and Stevens—we have room in
this month's Index to list only one name.

Finally, we're delighted that a few of
our readers thought so much of "Emma
T." ("SPY plays Love Connection With
New York's Bachelor of the Year,"
September 1990) that they wrote (her,
care of us) proposing marriage and,
well, all kinds of things. Delighted be-
cause we like to please our readers but
especially because, truth be told, it's
been years since we opened a letter that
began "HOT MAMA!"

C O R R E C T I O N S

The photo of Ronald Reagan that ap-
peared in the June 1990 issue was taken
by Stanley Tretick. In September, in
"Don't Charge Him, Mr. Mayor—He
Might Move the Team," we stated that
the San Francisco Giants owed \$4.5 mil-
lion to their hometown for improve-
ments to Candlestick Park. In fact, it is
the patrons who are currently saddled
with \$3.5 million for the stadium's im-
provements. In November's *Times* col-
umn we noted how similar Alessandra
Stanley's article about a George Bush-
Mikhail Gorbachev match was to the
usual drollery of Stanley's colleague Mau-
reen Dowd. We were more right than we
knew: Dowd wrote the article. And art-
direction help on November's cover was
provided by Randy Dunbar. Finally, in
September's "Rotisserie League Life," we
mistakenly listed Senator Peter Domenici
in our Scandal-Tainted Politicians cate-
gory. SPY sincerely regrets the error and
apologizes for any embarrassment it
may have caused Senator Domenici.

ATTENTION FANS OF
ROTISSERIE LEAGUE LIFE
We'd also promised an announcement
this month concerning an enormously
fun way to play Rotisserie League Life by
phone. We misspoke. We're not ready.
Please bear with us until next month.

pened to this reader.

Coupons accompanied the apologetic letters from the first two companies. Alba, however, sent an entire carton filled with boxes of Alba 66 hot chocolate. Perhaps the mosquito, pinned to the letterhead of my complaint, tugged at their collective consciences.

Jessica Elliott Andrus
Charlottesville, Virginia

DEAR EDITORS **Y**ou can imagine my dismay at finding what seemed to be dried, encrusted vomit on my pillowcase at the Hilton-owned, formerly almost prestigious Palmer House in Chicago. The floor had not been vacuumed and was covered with crumbs and feathers. (Had the last customer been involved in voodoo?) And the bedspread had a burn hole in it. After making my complaint known, I returned later in the evening to find nothing changed but the sheets (one of which had a hole). After the second complaint, the next day, I found the room to be semi-inhabitable. I was given a discount of \$50, leaving a \$65 balance for the night. In June I received a letter apologizing for the inconvenience. Mr. Hilton actually asked me to give them another try.

Mark Woodward
South Bend, Indiana

Keep in mind that readers are not specifically requested to share reminiscences of this sort with us.

DEAR EDITORS **H**ow rude! Sitting down to a plate of moo shu and steamed dumplings, I dug into the August SPY with vigor, gusto and delicious anticipation, only to come across an ad picturing three totally gelatinized naked women standing at a bar. If Cafe Luxembourg skimps on advertising by hiring third-rate models who clearly, long ago, lost their battles with gravity, I shudder to think what they do to keep food costs down. SPY must also be reprimanded for forfeiting readers' trust. If I were a more typical personal-injury lawyer, and if I weren't so smitten with SPY, I might pursue compensation for the trauma suffered upon viewing that horrifying photo.

George Tonelli Jr.
North Brunswick, New Jersey ➡

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DEAR EDITORS **K**udos and appreciation to Cafe Luxembourg and SPY for their ad. The stylish photo's stunning artistic value aside, the ad conveys a positive message to all women: Inner beauty, confidence and femininity beget physical beauty. Put more simply, you don't have to be model-thin to be beautiful. It's about time the media and their sponsors started depicting women truthfully, and not as the distorted adolescent fantasies of stunted male minds.

Debra Stone-Tonelli

North Brunswick, New Jersey

We're thinking sitcom, Tonellis.

DEAR EDITORS **I**n pointing out the perceived irony of "a gay antiviolence march in Greenwich Village [that] turned — that's correct — violent when hecklers started in on the marchers and about 50 of them responded by chasing the hecklers, trapping several in an apartment building" [Great Expectations, September], SPY made a couple of factual errors.

It was not "the editor of *OutWeek*" who was arrested but rather *an* editor of *OutWeek* — the features editor, to be precise. Though *OutWeek* editor in chief Gabriel Rotello is certainly a committed activist, it can safely be said that he fancies himself more of an academic than a street rabble-rouser, troublemaker and all-around hothead.

Also, the aforementioned features editor, who admittedly becomes quite excessive at times, was not arrested for "disorderly conduct after arguing with cops about the incident" but instead — and perhaps even more appropriate for SPY's documenting of life's little ironies — for forcefully punching an antigay heckler square in the head and sending the slimebag tumbling down the subway steps.

Michelangelo Signorile

Features editor

OutWeek

New York

DEAR EDITORS **Y**ou can't believe how happy I was to see your article on fake friendships ["What Passes for Friendship Today," by James Collins, September]. This type of friend-

ship-making for personal gain has trickled down to my high school in the past two years. Imagine this: the coffee-sipping future drama/art majors would gather together, choosing their friends by the clothes they wore. If a regular wasn't there one day, they would tell one another what they *really* thought of that person. The next day they would greet that person with a broad smile and a hug. The hugging that went on between people who hardly knew each other and could care less about each other was very frightening and sick. What is even more frightening is that before I left, it was catching through our school like wildfire. Beware of the class of '91 — they were the worst.

Name withheld on request

Evanston, Illinois

This is indeed terrifying stuff. Thanks for the warning. And if you think what we described was just like high school, then you'll certainly want to buy the Doubleday book SPY High: The Yearbook of America's Rich & Famous next May.

DEAR EDITORS **L**oved the Barry Sand exposé ["The Wrong Man in the Right Place at the Right Time," by Elissa Schappell and Harriet Barovick, September]. We staff members referred to Barry and Gayle as John and Yoko. One day we set up a dart board with a photograph of Yoko fastened to the bull's-eye, and for once there was a joyous feeling in the office as we gleefully took turns tossing darts at the symbol of our pent-up resentment. Thanks for exposing Barry Sand and Gayle Silverman as the crass and vulgar people they are and for sending an alert signal to any production executives who might be impressed by either's dubious achievements.

Name withheld on request

New York

DEAR EDITORS **I** am not a regular reader of SPY, but an article exposing and lambasting my former employer and his own Yoko Ono led me to the newsstand like a magnet to steel.

As one of the former staffers at *House Party*, I waited eagerly for the stories to be told. However, the magnitude of the exploitations of Gayle Silverman was not fully detailed. She is a vicious, inept, cal-

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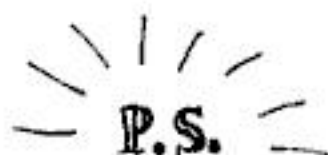
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or, if that's all you have, you can volunteer your time at Holy Apostle Soup Kitchen 296 Ninth Avenue (212) 924-0167



lous, foul-mouthed, controlling, insecure, uneducated demon. I didn't find any inaccuracies pertaining to Gayle's escapades at 30 Rockefeller Plaza—there just weren't enough of them mentioned.

"Once an addict, always an addict" sums up Barry Sand perfectly. To have allowed Yoko to manipulate him that way is enough to sicken an onlooker (much less staffers who sat for two to six hours a day in pointless meetings). I do not wish my worst enemy to be employed by the Ceausescus. I only hope that if the current rumor of Sand's writing a screenplay is true, the studio heads will think twice.

*Name withheld on request
New York*

DEAR EDITORS **S**o Sand is a pile of suet and so too is his demented concubine. But come on! TV types are generally monochromatic ferrets. Here we have in Barry and Gayle insanity bordering on greatness. Not quite Scott and Zelda, more like Schlock and Imelda, but at least some color—dull orange, perhaps, but color. They should get into politics; with the U.S. teetering on the brink

of extinction, given their track record, extinction would be a fait accompli.

*James Patrick Martin
Miami, Florida*

DEAR EDITORS **I** think SPY's writers deserve considerable credit, and not just for their supposed talent or innovation. It must require a tremendous amount of courage—valor, even—to present a SPY editor with a finished piece. What if the writer has made a really stupid mistake? Do any of the editors fly into fits of laughter? Do they run down the corridors and up the halls screaming, "Hey, you guys, look at the stuff So-and-so just gave me"?

*Madeleine Hutten
Berkeley, California*

Not half the courage and valor it takes to submit a letter to the editor. You're lucky, Ms. Hutten, that you weren't here when the above arrived. Laughter-fit-flying and corridor-running-and-screaming.

DEAR EDITORS **A**m I the only reader getting tired of the

anagram fanaticism that has infected the letters column lately? It seems to me you waste a lot of space every month on some clam who's seen *Rosemary's Baby* and has a sack of Scrabble tiles. There must be other, more challenging bits of SPY for your correspondents to try their hands at, no? "Name That Tune, Mr. Spock" [November 1989], for example. *That* was golden! Mind if I get that spherical object into a state of motion?

"There is a total lack of vaccine or similar relief for the feeling of ennui engendered by the period of the annum characterized by warmer overall temperatures."

"I resisted the body of legislative constraints upon behavior, and those same constraints emerged victorious."

*Joe Masset
Hollywood, California*

SPY welcomes letters from its readers. Address correspondence to SPY, The SPY Building, 5 Union Square West, New York, N.Y. 10003. Please include your daytime telephone number. Typewritten letters are preferred. Letters may be edited for length or clarity. ☽

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—LAURIE ANDERSON

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J. MONTANA

THE FINE PRINT

by Jamie Malanowski

A BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE'S COURT SPECIAL: THE TRIALS OF SYLVESTER STALLONE

It's hard to believe 14 years have passed since a blue-movie actor triumphantly insinuated himself into our consciousness as a big-hearted palooka who didn't know the meaning of the word *quit*. And yet that's how long we've spent getting to know Sly Stallone. Since then, he has given us so many unforgettable movies—*Paradise Alley*, *F.I.S.T.*, *Rhinestone*, *Lock Up* and more—while still finding time to treat us to the ups and downs of his romance with Brigitte Nielsen. He has been busy.

But not so busy that he couldn't have legal problems, and with astonishing frequency. Here, in chronological order, are the legal disputes to which he has been a party, at least in California, since his ascension to fame:

Vin and Sandra Scully v. Sylvester Stallone et al.
Scully—the much-lauded but, we think, subtly anti-New York baseball announcer—and his wife sued Stallone, his then wife and other neighbors in Pacific Palisades. The defendants, the Scullys said, “so carelessly and negligently altered, graded, contoured...and repaired [their] property...▶

AFTER A RECENT TELEVISION appearance flogging his new book, debtor-adulterer **DONALD TRUMP** and his ever-dwindling entourage swaggered off to the green room, where Trump hoped to hold court for the assembled female staff members. In the midst of some undoubtedly top chitchat, Trump, like a king offering a group of subjects the opportunity to validate a recent decree, popped a characteristically classy question. *Who do you think is more beautiful*, he asked, **MARLA** or **IVANA**? When one of the TV minions blurted, *Ivana—she's a real woman*, Trump seemed dismayed. And yet the plucky boor persisted. Spotting an 18-year-old male worker in the back of the room, he directed the question to the boy. *You there! Who do you think is more beautiful?* Understandably, the hormonally charged young fellow chose Marla. Trump turned to the crowd, smirking, and declared, *You see? Most men would agree.*

HIS FAMOUS AVERSIONS to leisure and interaction with other human beings notwithstanding, billionaire monopolist **S. I. NEWHOUSE JR.** does, on occasion, put on hard-soled shoes and a collared shirt for the sake of entertaining friends and associates at his private residence. At one such dinner party, Newhouse's guests fell all over one another complimenting him on the extravagance and deliciousness of the meal. Newhouse then informed the group that he had decided to send his cook back to culinary school. *Why?* his baffled guests wanted to know. *It's not that the food isn't good*, replied Newhouse, unwittingly articulating the credo of his magazine empire, *it's the presentation that needs work.*

AS IF FILMING ON LOCATION in New York City weren't enough of a challenge, **JOHN BADHAM**'s camera assistants for the forthcoming **JAMES WOODS-MICHAEL J. FOX** comedy *The Hard Way* were burdened with an additional duty. Whenever

the crew was shooting scenes in which Woods appeared, they had to make sure that all Panavision logos imprinted on set equipment were covered in tape—a daunting task, considering that Panavision is one of the film industry's principal equipment manufacturers and pretty much litters every bit of machinery with its name. Does Woods harbor a grudge against the company for its labor practices or for some unpublicized investments in South Africa? Hardly; crew members were told that the high-strung actor's beloved had run off with a Panavision operative. One day, when Woods kept flubbing his lines, Badham asked whether something was wrong. Woods bellowed, *How do you expect me to do this scene with the word Panavision glaring out at me?*

THREE-TIME BRIDEGROOM and Super Bowl hero **JOE MONTANA** has lately padded his enormous San Francisco 49ers salary—professional football's highest—by appearing in a series of television advertisements for Pepsi-Cola. One recent spot, filmed especially for Christmas, shows Montana comfortably nestled in a Currier & Ives—perfect living room, trying to read a newspaper while an offscreen “wife” henpecks him. “Joe,” she says, “did you remember to get the turkey?” “Yes, dear,” Montana wearily responds. The cutesy hectoring continues in this fashion, concluding with the wife's asking, “Joe, did you remember to get the Pepsi?” to which Montana again replies, “Yes, dear.” Sadly, viewers will see only this cornball version of the commercial and not the alternate, not-for-broadcast take, made with the quarterback's jolly participation, which goes as follows:

“Joe, these handcuffs—are they yours?”

“Yes, dear.”

“Joe, have you been wearing these leather panties?”

“Yes, dear.”

“Joe, I just found two gerbils in a box—do they belong to you?”

Montana smirks into the camera. “Yes, dear.”

WHY WE FIGHT, PART II

An Exclusive Look at the U.S. Army's 1943 Tour Guide for Soldiers in Iraq



You have been ordered to Iraq (i-RAHK) as part of the worldwide offensive," begins an official U.S. government booklet that recently came across our desks. *A Short Guide to Iraq* speaks in the strongest terms about the fiendish despot our troops have been sent to the Persian Gulf to oppose. He "knows he's licked if the peoples united against him stand their ground," the patriotic authors declare wishfully. "Years from now you'll be telling your children and maybe your grandchildren stories beginning, 'Now when I was in Baghdad —.'" Indeed you will, as these perky 47-year-old excerpts demonstrate:

► "The first thing you notice will be the smells.... You will smell and feel a lot of the things the movies didn't warn you about."

► "Avoid eating unwashed vegetables and fruits. They may be contaminated by human excrement....

Intestinal diseases, such as dysentery and tapeworm, are very common in Iraq."

► "If you should see grown men

walking hand in hand, ignore it.

They are not 'queer.'"

► "Shake hands with the Iraqi; otherwise don't touch them or slap them on the back."

► "Don't make a pass at any Moslem woman or there will be trouble. Anyway, it won't get you anywhere.

Prostitutes do not walk the streets but live in special quarters in the city."

► "Never give [Iraqis] pork to eat

or offer it to them even in fun."

► "Discuss something else — NEVER religion or politics or women — with Moslems."

► "Be generous with your cigarettes."

► "Many of the Iraqis believe in the 'evil eye.' This is a good deal in their minds like putting a 'hex' on a person is to people in parts of our country."

► "Do not urinate in their presence. They do it squatting and dislike to see other people do it standing up." — *Tom Wood*



THE FINE PRINT CONTINUED

that on or about the 14th day of February, 1980, rainwater from said property was caused to and did flood onto the premises of the plaintiffs." The Scullys sued for \$35,000 in actual damages, plus \$1 million in punitive damages. They filed again three years later, seeking \$100,000 in actual damages and \$10 million in punitive damages. We have been unable to learn whether these suits have been settled, but a legal assistant at the firm working for Scully asked, "Why don't you ever write positive things?"

Sylvester Stallone v. Ed Mancini et al.

Stallone alleges that in 1980 he agreed to purchase from Mancini a 1958 Chevrolet Impala for \$10,000. Eight months later, the actor says, he had spent \$13,000 and still had no car. He sued for \$13,000, plus interest, plus "general damages not presently ascertainable" — as if one could ever really know how badly one has been damaged by not being able to sit in a '58 Impala after one has set one's heart on it. Stallone's attorneys would not comment about whether the suit had been settled, and his publicist, Paul Bloch, said he had "no idea. None whatsoever."

Croak-Stewart Inc. v. Beverly Hills Gun Club Inc., Sylvester Stallone, et al.

In his capacity as an investor in the club, Stallone was sued by a building contractor who had performed some work on the clubhouse. According to Croak-Stewart's attorney, the case was settled out of court for "around \$80,000."

Zeev Drori v. Sylvester Stallone et al.

Stallone agreed to sell to Drori property in Bel Air for \$550,000. Drori put down \$100,000, pending his approval of the preliminary title report and physical inspection. After these ►

PRIVATE LIVES OF PUBLIC FIGURES



White House Chief of Staff John Sununu discusses policy matters with colleagues at a Cabinet meeting.

ILLUSTRATION BY DREW FRIEDMAN

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Special Gulf-Crisis Edition

SADDAM HUSSEIN
USA HID MADNESS

PRESIDENT HUSSEIN
HIS INEPT RUDENESS

HOSNI MUBARAK
OK, AMBUSH IRAN

SHEIK JABER AL-AHMED AL-SABAH
[emir of Kuwait]

AHA! A BAD, HELLISH
JAMES BAKER

— *Andy Aaron*

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Upcoming

THE FINE PRINT CONTINUED

reports, Drori tried to cancel the deal. Stallone said the objections were baseless and made beyond a contractually specified period. The case was presumably settled out of court; Drori's attorney said he had no recollection of it.

Joseph Letizia v. Michael Stallone, aka Sylvester Stallone
Letizia says Stallone agreed to pay him \$40,000 for unnamed "services" rendered during the production of *Rocky* and *Rocky III*. "Gee, I know nothing about that," commented Stallone's publicist. "I wasn't around then. I'm sure I wouldn't be handling that case."

Film Artists Management Enterprises Inc. v. Sylvester Stallone et al.
Stallone's former managers maintained they had been deprived of income due them from *Rocky III*. The managers said that after *Rocky II* was completed, Stallone replaced them and said they'd get 0.25 percent of gross receipts in excess of what was called the artificial break-even point, which was set at \$22-million. When the film earned about \$50 million, the managers earned \$105,000. The agreement further held that their compensation for *Rocky III* would be calculated in a similar way. However, since Stallone had successfully renegotiated his contract with the movie's producers, the artificial break-even point was raised to \$80 million, and so, instead of getting \$116,000, the managers got nothing. This case was settled out of court.

Sylvester Stallone v. Concept Design and Construction
Stallone says he hired CDC to renovate his Pacific Palisades residence in September 1980 (why, about seven months after that unpleasant Scully business started). Among his allegations are that CDC charged exorbitant rates for laborers and damaged the ▶

3 Tree-lighting ceremony at Rockefeller Center. In the ensuing media blitz, the *Daily News* informs us that it's a Norway spruce, 78 feet tall and 112 years old. The *Times* runs a profile of the Canadian farmer whose property produced the tree.
4 "Accent Reduction," a Baruch College Continuing Studies course "for non-native English speakers who wish to improve accents ranging from mild to severe," meets for its final session this semester. Students are evaluated on their ability to read *Lake Wobegon Days* just as Garrison Keillor would.

8 The Army-Navy football game; Veterans Stadium, Philadelphia. The Midshipmen's coach disputes the referee's repeated holding calls, claiming his offensive line is simply practicing "interdiction."
11 First night of Chanukah. The Lubavitch Youth Organization lights a giant menorah at Grand Army Plaza. For the next eight days, midwestern tourists are bewildered by the sight of what they take to be a huge, luminous rake.
12 Frank Sinatra turns 75. Alternate-side-of-the-street parking suspended in Hoboken.



17 Gene Rayburn celebrates his birthday. How old is he? So old that he requires electroshock every morning just to get up and BLANK.
21 The Friday before Christmas. Normally reticent bookkeepers, having had one eggnog too many, enliven office parties with lewd renditions of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." Female employees take special offense at the gestures accompanying "eight maids a-milking."
23 Fifteenth anniversary of Congress's enactment of the Metric Conversion Act. An accomplishment as enduring and

pertinent as the president who signed it into law.
25 Christmas. VCR Alert! Check local listings for starting time of WPIX's 25th annual broadcast of a burning Yule log.
27 Effective today, any New York resident who owns a freestanding fuel-oil storage tank with a capacity of 1,100 gallons or more — i.e., landlords and other building owners — must comply with the state's new antispillage regulations or risk imprisonment and/or fines of up to \$25,000. Kind of a nitpicky law for the holiday season; on the other hand, it would be gratifying to see Peter Kalikow, say, spend New Year's Eve in jail. ☾

SUSPENDED

BLURB-O-MAT

Capitol Movie Reviews by Walter "Dateline: The Copa" Monheit™, the Movie Publicist's Friend

As previously announced, Walter Monheit™'s "Special Product-Placement Edition" of Blurb-o-Mat in the October issue prompted SPY's ombudsman to investigate Monheit for alleged ethical improprieties. An intensive six-week probe has concluded that Monheit is guilty of violating Rule 21(f) of the SPY Tenets of Journalistic Ethics, which states that "no SPY personnel shall engage in conduct contrary to the best interests of the magazine."

Though Monheit has been given a one-month suspension, a violation of this nature has traditionally warranted expulsion. In deference to his years of service and his singular ability to limbo-dance with a martini glass balanced on his head, SPY has decided to place Monheit's fate in the hands of you, his readers. Please cast your vote by checking one of the boxes below, then clip this ballot and send it to Monheit Plugola Scandal, c/o SPY, The SPY Building, 5 Union Square West, New York, N.Y. 10003.



Walter Monheit™ is a harmless fellow who merely took one wayward step, and he should therefore be **KEPT ON**.



Walter Monheit™'s egregious behavior merits no sympathy. **EXPULSION** at once!





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THE FINE PRINT CONTINUED

gate speaker, living-room floor, screening room and landscaping. His attorneys had no comment on this case.

Sylvester Stallone v. Francisco Mir, dba Ferrari Diagnosis Services and Sales

Car trouble again. In 1985, Stallone bought a Ferrari GTO, a 1983-84 Ferrari Boxer, an AMG engine and a 1985 Porsche 930S with a 935 engine from Mir. He claims that the 1983-84 Ferrari Boxer was actually a 1981-82 model, that the Porsche was not equipped with the special 935 engine and that Mir kept the AMG engine. "What was the date on that?" Stallone's publicist asked. "I never heard of that before."

Laura and Renato Gugenheim v. Sylvester Stallone

More trouble in Pacific Palisades. In 1986, Stallone's neighbors maintained, Stallone broke a local regulation prohibiting the construction of walls higher than six feet. Stallone's eight-foot wall obstructed the Gugenheims' view (not, apparently, of the ocean but of passing traffic). Stallone lost; the wall came down.

Tim Anderson v. Sylvester Stallone, Freddie Fields, Frank Yablans, et al.

Anderson claimed that he wrote a treatment for the screenplay of *Rocky IV*. He said he'd met Art Linkletter, a member of the MGM/UA board, through friends in 1982 and told him of a plot outline and treatment that had Rocky facing a "huge Aryan East Bloc opponent." Linkletter had "immediately arranged for a meeting that afternoon" with Fields, then president of MGM/UA. Anderson said he'd left his 31-page treatment with Fields. Six months later, after hearing nothing, Anderson said, he met with Stallone, who allegedly said the material was "great stuff." Anderson ▶

LAURA DERN: ACTRESS — OR COSMOLOGICAL TRAILBLAZER?

"The best description of [Crispin] Glover may be the one offered by Laura Dern, who stars in *Wild at Heart*: 'He's a cool-cantaloupe cat and the most dedicated actor I've ever worked with,' she says. 'He has no problem traveling to Pluto.'"

—*Premiere*, August 1990

"In *Wild at Heart* I met David [Lynch] on Jupiter, and we were on that planet together."

—the *Today* show, August 15, 1990

"Oh, I'm ready. Take me off. I've been on Jupiter, I'm ready for Saturn, that's the way I feel!"

—*Entertainment Tonight*, same day

"'Lula should be a definition in the dictionary now for birdbrain genius,' Dern says of her character [in *Wild at Heart*]. 'That's what she is, an air-head wisewoman. She's the coolest thing, I love her. She's the ultimate person. She's definitely on Jupiter, as

I have been since I did the film. I don't think I'll ever come back. I might visit Pluto or Saturn, but Earth is not a possibility for me anymore.'" —*Movieline*, September 1990

"'You're gonna be so scared by this movie. I went to Jupiter with this one,' [Dern] says happily over lunch at a restaurant near her apartment in a Los Angeles suburb. 'It was so much fun. That's the other thing that's scary. I went to Jupiter, and it is cool on Jupiter!'"

—*Premiere*, September 1990

"Laura Dern says trusting Lynch 'allowed me to go to Jupiter with this character.'"

—*People*, September 3, 1990

"'I wanted to go to Jupiter,' she says. 'That was my plan from day one, and David gave me the ticket.'"

—*Interview*, September 1990

—Jonathan Danziger

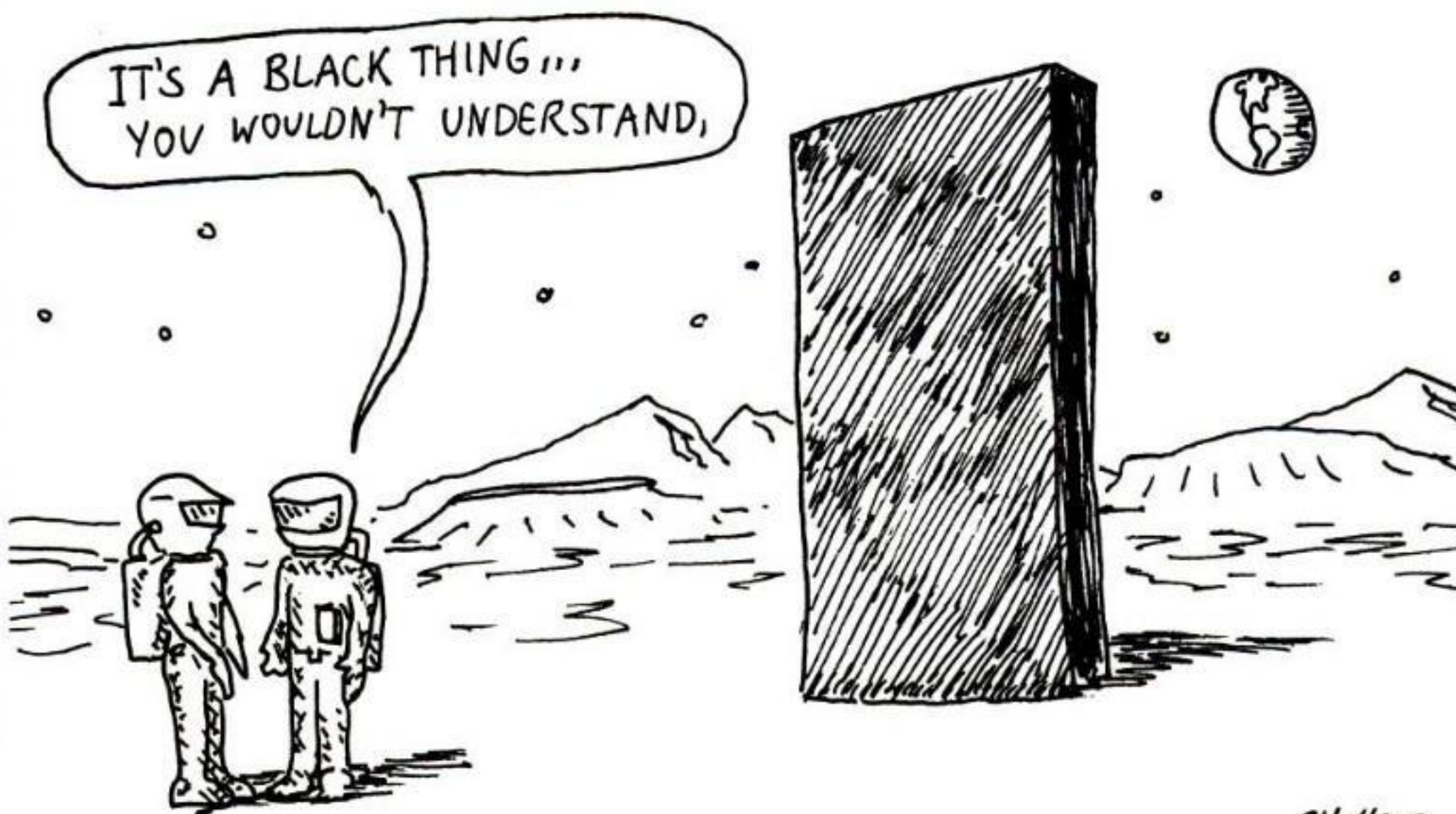


THE LIZ SMITH TOTE BOARD

A Monthly Tally

mentioned once every...	
Liz herself	1.2
Donald Trump	3
Adolf Hitler	6
Saddam Hussein	6
Ivana Trump	6
Madonna	8
Barbara Walters	8
Maria Callas	12
Marla Maples	12
Serendipity	12
Communism's "world-wide collapse"	24
Greece's "nine disastrous years of super-socialism"	24
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2001: Spike Lee's Remake



R. Hutter

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THE FINE PRINT CONTINUED

left the treatment with Stallone. Two weeks later, Stallone officially passed. Two months later, Anderson learned the studio was still pushing Stallone to make the film. Studio executives again met with Anderson, but soon they broke off talks. In November 1985, *Rocky IV*, featuring Rocky fighting a huge Russian, was released to enormous success. Contending breach of contract and fraud, Anderson sued, but since he had obtained nothing in writing, the case was dismissed.

Andrew F. Bertinelli Jr. v. Sylvester Stallone et al.
In 1987, Stallone's bodyguard beat up Bertinelli in Malibu. The bodyguard claimed Bertinelli was threatening Stallone, but the suit was settled out of court in the plaintiff's favor for five figures.

Sylvester Stallone v. Colt Industries
Colt's Patent Firearms subsidiary approached Stallone about appearing in an ad campaign for its Heirloom Gun. Stallone, citing his rule against endorsing products in this country, declined. Stallone maintains that a freelance journalist, misled by a Colt executive, wrote an article about Stallone and Heirloom for *Guns* magazine. Stallone sued; the case is still pending.

Richard Dobbins and Evan Slawson v. Carolco Pictures, Sylvester Stallone, et al.
The plaintiffs say that in 1985, "with the consent, permission and request by defendants," they wrote a treatment, *Rambo: The Holy War*, with Rambo at the heart of the Soviet-Afghan conflict. The treatment was well received by the producers and went through several rewrites, but the plaintiffs say they were eventually cut off without compensation or credit. They claim the final screenplay, credited to Stallone ▶






BUILDING A BETTER WILBURY

Rescuing the Careers of Rock's Aged and Infirm

Too often the course of a rock musician's life takes him from the Easy Street delirium of *Shindig* to a sad denouement of heavy drug use, public indifference and biannual appearances at the Westbury Music Fair. Roy Orbison was suffering at least one of these plights when, in 1987, several younger performers, among them Bruce Springsteen and Elvis Costello, helped establish a personality cult around the earthwormish balladeer. By 1988, George Harrison, Bob Dylan, Tom Petty and Electric Light Orchestra refugee Jeff Lynne had asked Orbison to join them in creating the Traveling Wilburys, thus completing

his rehabilitation. Alas, Orbison died just as the Wilburys' debut album was gaining popular momentum and his own new record was being readied for release. His death robbed the public of its Sympathy Wilbury—the Wilbury whose membership in the group constituted a feel-good, roots-sensitive, life-affirming comeback.

While it's admirable that the surviving Wilburys have vowed to continue as a foursome, there are plenty of legendary rockers who could benefit from performing with Harrison, Dylan and Petty (and Lynne). Below, the merits and drawbacks of some potential Sympathy Wilburys.

WOULD-BE WILBURY	PROS	CONS
Dion 	Former heroin addict; fine high tenor; would engage in doo-wop histrionics with Lynne	Doesn't play guitar; has already released comeback album; that <i>bat</i>
Don and Phil Everly 	Former speed freaks; adept harmonizers—would eliminate need for awkward unison vocals by Dylan and Petty	One Sympathy Wilbury too many; history of onstage squabbling; inevitable rerecording of "Bird Dog," with Dylan taking low part
Donovan 	Fondly remembered; long dormant; Scottish; accompanied Harrison and other Beatles when they went to India in 1967 to meditate with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi	Lyrically absurd ("I Love My Shirt"); was actually, for a few minutes in 1960s, considered a rival to Dylan—flare-up could result in bent harmonica harnesses and torn clumps of curly hair
Barry White 	Might bring much-needed groupies to backstage scene in event of tour; would do double duty as the Wilbury of Love	Has already released comeback album; Harrison might balk at singing lyrics like "Take off that brassiere, my dear"
Paul McCartney 	Plays bass; has professed eagerness to collaborate with Harrison; would bring Visa endorsements	Control freak; has just completed epic comeback tour; writes songs about small children; comes with Linda
Peter Yarrow 	Could deliver an <i>Onstage at Wolf Trap</i> PBS special	Is bald; would demand show of hands to see who preferred the <i>other</i> version of "Blowin' in the Wind"
Joe Strummer 	Punkish, hard-edged sound would expand appeal beyond group's core audience of paunchily contented 38-year-olds; Jim Jarmusch and Alex Cox would direct videos	Penchant for yelling "Sod off!"; old "Phony Beatlemania has bitten the dust" line from Clash days might come back to haunt him
John Sebastian 	Would cultivate untapped audience of Lovin' Spoonful fans; proven Top Forty success; would do double duty as the Cute Wilbury	Wrote and sang theme to <i>Welcome Back, Kotter</i>
Freddie Mercury 	Soaring falsetto would fill void left by departure of Orbison's beatific tremolo	Is ridiculous; preference for trash-operatic sets and skintight costumes would alarm Dylan; just not a Wilbury

—John Brodie and David Kamp



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THE FINE PRINT CONTINUED

and Sheldon Lettich, looks a lot like their treatment. The case is in litigation.

Rogue Marble Productions and Sylvester Stallone v. Chuck Drury, dba Coachworks
Stallone contended Drury had orally agreed to customize a motor home by May 1986 for Stallone to use as living quarters while filming *Over the Top*. Stallone maintained that the motor home arrived late and "in a totally defective and unmarketable condition." Stallone said he paid Drury anyway — *didn't we learn anything from the Mancini business, Sly?* — but that Drury wanted more money. Drury's attorney tersely said the case was settled.

Sylvester Stallone v. Barbara Guggenheim, Stewart Pivar, et al.

Stallone alleges that in 1984 he hired Guggenheim as an art consultant and in January 1988 Guggenheim advised him to buy a William Bouguereau from Pivar, telling him it was a "masterpiece" and an "excellent investment." Stallone bought the painting, sight unseen, for \$1.785 million, including an \$85,000 commission to Guggenheim. Later, Stallone says, he discovered that the painting "had substantial damage to its surface area, including several large slashes." Stallone sued for \$35-million in damages; his publicist said he hoped for an out-of-court settlement.

Incidentally, Frank Stallone tried to duplicate Sly's litigation career as well as his show biz one. True to form, he didn't quite get it right, and became party to a suit involving the Beverly Hills Gun Shop, not Club. One day in 1986, apparently, the manager was demonstrating the action on a Colt (*them again!*) Python .357 Magnum and accidentally shot Frank in the hand. Frank, by the way, collected. ☺

"[My East Hampton manor house is] the last truly rural spot in the Hamptons. **Lorne Michaels** is just a couple of houses away, **Billy Joel** and **Christie Brinkley** own a place down the road, **Ann** and **Mick Jones** rent right along here, **Anne** and **Brian McNally** rent across the street, **Lauren Bacall** lives across the street, and **Sherry** and **Edgar Bronfman, Jr.**, are at the end of my driveway.... **Daryl Hannah**, **Steve Martin**, **Anjelica Huston**, **Mick Jagger**, **Kathleen Turner** and **John Kennedy, Jr.**, have played on this [tennis] court.... I bought the motorcycles because we were in Normandy with **Malcolm Forbes** and I drove his."

— Jann Wenner, in *Architectural Digest*

"A good friend of mine, **Sir Geoffrey Howe**, visited here with **Lady Howe** when he was **foreign secretary** — they stayed at Government House, of course, but they spent time with me. They were down with the United States **secretary of state** — that was **Mr. [George] Shultz** at the time — and **Mrs. Shultz**. I gave a lunch for Mrs. Shultz and Lady Howe while the ministers were meeting, and then we all met after lunch. Another good friend of mine is **Richard Burt**, head of the U.S. delegation for nuclear and space talks — he used to be **ambassador to West Germany**."

— Robert Stigwood, in *Architectural Digest*

SEPARATED AT BIRTH?



Francis Ford Coppola...



and Allen Ginsberg?



David Souter...



and Joseph Goebbels?



Andrew Dice Clay...



and David "Son of Sam" Berkowitz?

THE MUSE DESCENDS

A Pocket Guide to Entertainment Diminution

MOVIE

planet explodes
the Devil materializes
crowd roars
nudity
camera pans...battlefield
Jaws
Mel Gibson
super submarines
Max Von Sydow
spilling viscera
"Motherfucker!"
untrue to the novel

MINISERIES

train derails
ghostly voice
family gathers
negligee
...devastated cornfield
Black Beauty
Barry Bostwick
Nazi roadblock
Richard Chamberlain
convincing cuts
"Son of a bitch!"
untrue to history

SITCOM

offscreen fender bender
lights go out
neighbors drop in
double entendre
...pots and pans
Peg Bundy
Alan Thicke
blind date
Betty White
attractive-looking black eye
"Dweeb!"
true to the hit song

— Mark O'Donnell

In 1762, Hugh McDermott neglected to give a bottle of Drambuie to the postman for Christmas. To this day, no member of the McDermott clan has ever received so much as a postcard.



As legends go, this fact may well be fiction. But what is indisputably the truth is that Drambuie is the legendary liqueur with a uniquely satisfying taste. Drink Drambuie, the liqueur flavored with wild heather honey and the finest malt whiskies. Or, now that the holidays are near, give Drambuie. Scottish in origin, distinctive in taste, unchanged since 1745.

Drambuie. The stuff legends are made of.

40% Alc/Vol. © W.A. Taylor & Co., Miami, FL 1990.

'PUPPIES, WALKS ON THE BEACH AND ANYTHING BY AYN RAND'

A SPY White Paper: The State of Playmatehood So Far

In 1977 the forward-thinking editors of *Playboy* had every reason to be pleased with themselves. Painfully honest presidential candidate Jimmy Carter had recently embarrassed himself with revelations about his sexual fantasies in an interview, and painfully awkward actor Kris Kristofferson had embarrassed himself by staging sexual acts with Sarah Miles in front of a photographer. Ad sales were healthy, readership was strong, America was promiscuous as never before—all seemed right in the world of Hef. And yet...and yet, *there was something missing*.

In the summer of that year, the editors came up with the

answer. *Our readers want to know more about our centerfolds*, they realized. In a ground-breaking move, they decreed that the cold, hard facts about each and every Playmate would be laid before the public—their hopes, their dreams, their measurements, their turn-ons and turnoffs. *The public had a right to know*.

Someday, perhaps, historians will pore over these data to learn something about the mind-set of a certain enervated New World empire in the late twentieth century. Until then, we have FRANK SPOTNITZ's exhaustive analysis of the Playmate Data Sheets, 1977–90.¹

BUST SIZE²

Average.....	35"
Median.....	35"
Smallest.....	32"
Largest.....	40"



WAIST SIZE

Average.....	23"
Median.....	24"
Smallest.....	20"
Largest.....	26"

HIP SIZE

Average.....	34"
Median.....	34"
Smallest.....	32"
Largest.....	37"

WEIGHT³

Average.....	113 lbs.
Median.....	112 lbs.
Least.....	94 lbs.
Most.....	130 lbs.

HEIGHT

Average.....	5'6"
Median.....	5'7"
Shortest.....	5'½"
Tallest.....	5'11"

AGE⁴

Average.....	22
Median.....	22
Youngest.....	18
Oldest.....	33

NAMES

Type of name	Number of Playmates
First name that starts with a K.....	20
Glamorous, European-sounding (e.g., Monique St. Pierre, Carina Persson, Sylvie Garant).....	18
First name Kim, Kym, Kimberly or Kymberly.....	7
Sweet, cuddly (e.g., Candy Loving, Brandy Brandt, Gianna Amore).....	6
Place name (Missy Cleveland, India Allen and Venice Kong).....	3

ETHNICITY

Number of Playmates who are black: 5 (3%)

Number of Playmates who are Asian-American: 4 (2.5%)

TOP 20 AMBITIONS

Goal	Number of votes
1. Acting.....	36
2. Happiness.....	29
3. Modeling.....	23
4. Success.....	21
5. Travel.....	15
6. Personal growth.....	12
7. Help others/do good.....	11
Lasting relationship/marriage.....	11
9. Family.....	10
Live life to the fullest.....	10
11. Homeownership.....	8
12. College degree/further education.....	5
Dance.....	5
Self-sufficiency/security.....	5
Wealth.....	5
16. Health.....	4
Love.....	4
Movie star.....	4
Oscar winner.....	4
Playboy promotion.....	4

Number of Playmates responding who went on to become well-known actresses: 2 (the late Dorothy Stratten and Julie McCullough,

formerly Kirk Cameron's girlfriend on *Growing Pains*)

TOP 20 TURN-ONS

Category	Number of votes
1. Music.....	34
2. Cars.....	28
3. Animals.....	27
4. Beach and ocean.....	22
5. Clothes.....	21
6. Flowers.....	18
7. Sun and sunset.....	17
8. Outdoors and nature.....	16
9. Dancing.....	15
Rain, thunder, lightning.....	15
11. Honesty.....	13
Wine and champagne.....	13
13. Friends.....	12
Massages.....	12
Money (credit cards, spending it).....	12
16. Traveling.....	11
Well-built men.....	11
18. Funny people/sense of humor.....	9
Happy/positive/friendly people.....	9
Jewels and jewelry.....	9

TOP 20 TURNOFFS

Category	Number of votes
1. Tobacco and smoke.....	24
2. Rude or pushy people.....	23
3. Jealousy.....	21
4. Traffic.....	16
Waiting.....	16
6. Pessimists or naysayers.....	15
7. Phony people.....	11
8. Egomaniacs and egotists.....	10
Judgmental people.....	10
Liars.....	10
Pollution and litter.....	10
Waking up early.....	10
13. Cold weather.....	9
Dishonesty.....	9
15. Drugs.....	8
Mistreatment of animals.....	8
Smog.....	8
18. Crowds.....	7
Violence.....	7
20. Possessive men.....	6

PLAYMATES' FAVORITE BOOKS

<i>Illusions</i> , by Richard Bach.....	4
<i>Notes to Myself</i> , by Hugh Prather.....	3
<i>Shogun</i> , by James Clavell.....	3
<i>Siddhartha</i> , by Hermann Hesse.....	3
<i>Atlas Shrugged</i> , by Ayn Rand.....	2
<i>Dune</i> , by Frank Herbert.....	2
<i>Your Erroneous Zones</i> , by Wayne Dyer.....	2
<i>Gone With the Wind</i> , by Margaret Mitchell.....	2
<i>The Great Gatsby</i> , by F. Scott Fitzgerald.....	2
<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> , by Mark Twain.....	2
<i>Lady Chatterley's Lover</i> , by D. H. Lawrence.....	2
<i>Jonathan Livingston Seagull</i> , by Richard Bach.....	2
<i>Looking Out for Number One</i> , by Robert J. Ringer.....	2
<i>Les Misérables</i> , by Victor Hugo.....	2
<i>Of Human Bondage</i> , by W. Somerset Maugham.....	2



¹Based on an analysis of Playmate Data Sheets from July 1977 to September 1990. Playmates were not all asked the same questions.

²Out of 160 Playmates, number who refused to supply measurements: 1.

³Number of Playmates who refused to reveal their weight: 2.

⁴Number of Playmates who refused to reveal their age: 3.

Good
Clean
Fun



William F.
Buckley Jr. ...



and Gomer Pyle?



Bette Davis ...



and the tree in
The Wizard of Oz?



Julian Lennon ...



and Tiffany?



Leona Helmsley ...



and the Joker?

SPY BOOK SEPARATED AT BIRTH? 2

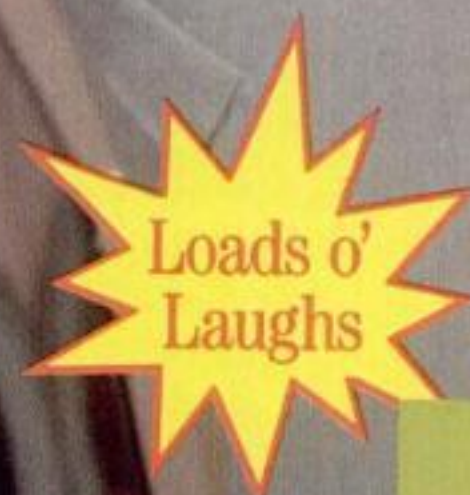


Geraldine ...



and Bozo the
Clown?

THE SAGA CONTINUES



The matching magic is back!

Return to that strangely familiar world of unlikely look-alikes in this spanking new collection of over 250 pairs and triplets. Here at last, more of a very good thing, only new and improved.

At better bookstores now!

A
SPY
BOOK

DOLPHIN • DOUBLEDAY

Copyrighted material

FINALLY, A SOLUTION TO THE FATHERLAND'S IMAGE PROBLEM

A Speculative Can-Do Plan to Reposition Germany



TO: Helmut Kohl
FROM: Rutger Ailes Communications AG
RE: How to Sell German Reunification

It's wonderful to see how quickly our reunification drive has succeeded! Nothing has happened this fast for you since the spring of 1940.

But this time, we don't want to peak too soon. That's why now's the time to really grab market share. We want to position ourselves to continue to strengthen consumer interest in the all-new-and-improved Fatherland. Even after all this time, we're drawing high negatives in non-German countries because of certain unfortunate and tragic events in the past, particularly the Nazi thing.

Holocaust-wise, we've still got a major image problem.

Major, but not insurmountable.

As you suggested, our advertising consultants have come up with a new multimedia public-relations campaign that should begin to do the trick.

When it comes to remarketing the past, we've got a lot going for us. People born after World War II—that is, most adults—have only the fuzziest knowledge of the Third Reich. This gives us the opportunity to emphasize our glorious *German* past while downplaying the painful *Nazi* past. In addition, new studies indicate that an overwhelming majority of Germans are direct descendants of the 22 army officers who tried in 1944 to assassinate Hitler.

And let's not forget the tourism angle, where we earn bonus points for "confronting" the past. We've already drawn up some preliminary theme-park plans that could help. Enclosed you'll find sketches for the DachauPlace shopping-hotel-mourning complex. Visitors will be greeted at the gate by young Germans saying "We're sorry!" in ten different languages. And note the plans for merchandise: the NEVER AGAIN T-shirts and the I ♥ JEWS coffee mugs were big hits here in the office.

We shouldn't only trade on the past—we must capitalize on the future with a forward-looking image that emphasizes the good points about our traditional love of the land and distaste for "impurities." So, keying into the growing worldwide concern over environmental issues, Germany has an important role to play in leading our neighboring countries (particularly Austria, Poland and Hungary) toward an environmentally sound future. These countries—even if they don't know it yet—are crying out for our firm guidance to clean up their nations. We should not hesitate to give it.

The best vehicle for promoting this agenda is an Environmental Youth League, or "Green Shirts." We envision this as a highly disciplined troop of young German idealists who will stop at nothing to rid the world of trash, even shutting down factories—in Germany or bordering countries—that despoil our precious lands. The Green Shirts will revitalize the spirit of volunteerism and patriotism that has lain dormant in our land for 40 years. The sight of thousands of smiling, helpful young Germans marching into, say, Poland, armed with mops, buck-

ets and air-purifier masks, is sure to inspire the world.

Before we can truly rebuild our image, though, we must correct the dangerous myths that have somehow grown up around Germany and our people over the years. The obvious move is the series of newspaper ads we discussed. Here's what we're thinking about, with some sample copy:

GERMANY: IT'S NOT AS BAD AS YOU THINK

As Germany achieves reunification, it's time to crumble a lot of hoary old myths that continue to flourish—despite 45 years of peaceful foreign relations and respect for human rights. In all that time, we have never started a war or committed *any* act of genocide—a better record than some other countries we could name. Let's look at the real facts about Deutschland.

MYTH

The German people are anti-Semitic.

FACT

An independent poll of German citizens found that 98 percent said that although they personally had never met any Jews, if they did, they'd "be sure to treat them just like regular Germans." In addition, anti-Semitism is *against the law* in Germany.

MYTH

Germans are naturally aggressive.

FACT

Germany has produced gentle-hearted poets, philosophers, artists, scientists and musicians such as Thomas Mann, Albert Einstein and Kurt Weill, who took sabbaticals from their homeland during World War II to become goodwill ambassadors to America. And one recent poll found that 98 percent of Germans agreed with the statements "I would never hurt a fly" and "I like to read poetry in my spare time."

MYTH

Germans are meticulous, dour technocrats who love machines more than people.

FACT

So? Would you rather fly Air Panama?

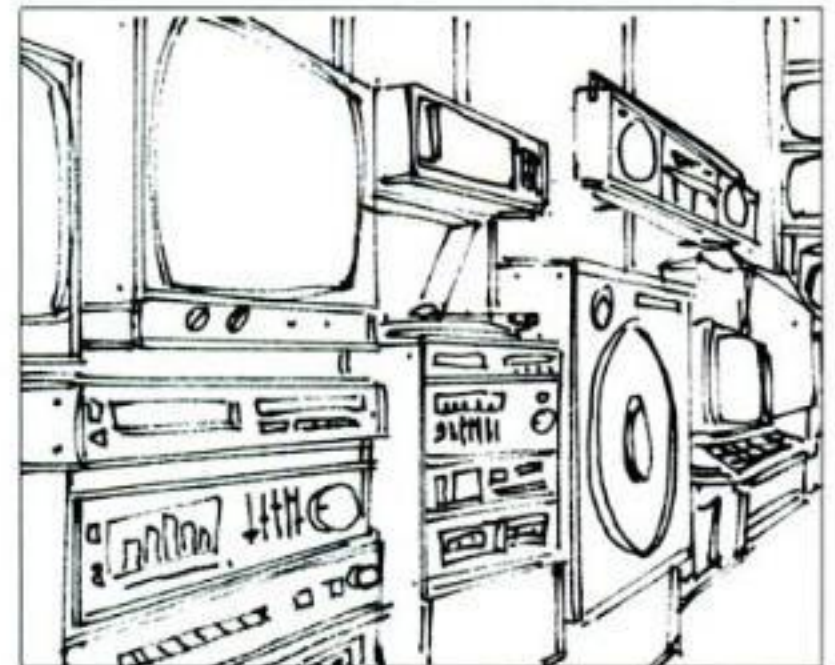


naked city

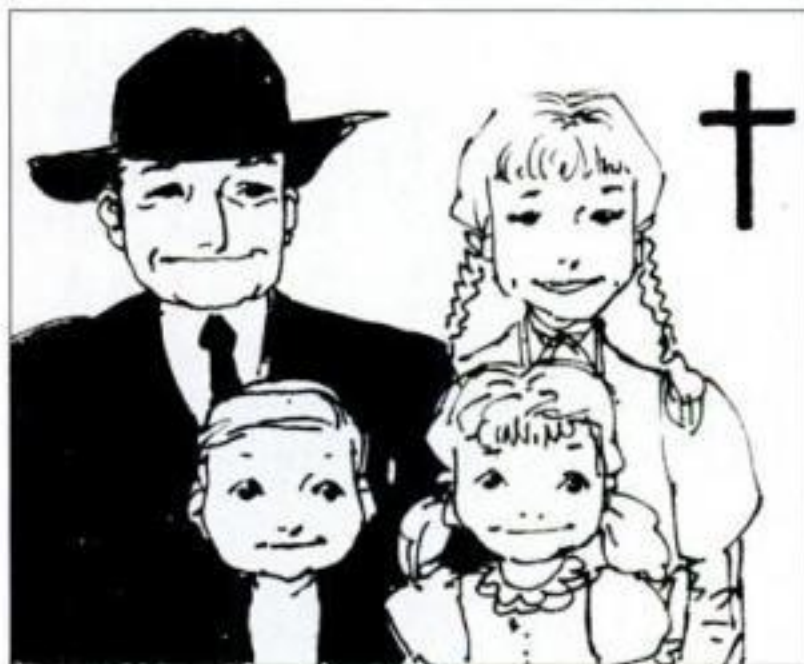
This print campaign will be supplemented by a series of 30-second television spots. One of our best tactics is to borrow a technique from U.S. political advertising and create a lightning rod for the public's negative feelings. After all these years of being stereotyped, it's high time that we put forward a more positive image, and permit another successful, prosperous nation to share the scapegoat role. Here are the storyboards for one such ad.



Voice-over: After the devastation of World War II, *one* country set about quietly rebuilding its cities, paid reparations and asked the world only for forgiveness...



VO: ...while the *other* country started manufacturing electronic goods that Americans could not live without, eventually undermining America's economic self-sufficiency.



VO: One country, where the people are a lot like Americans, was split in half. Large numbers of people, having suffered through the war, were enslaved by Communism...



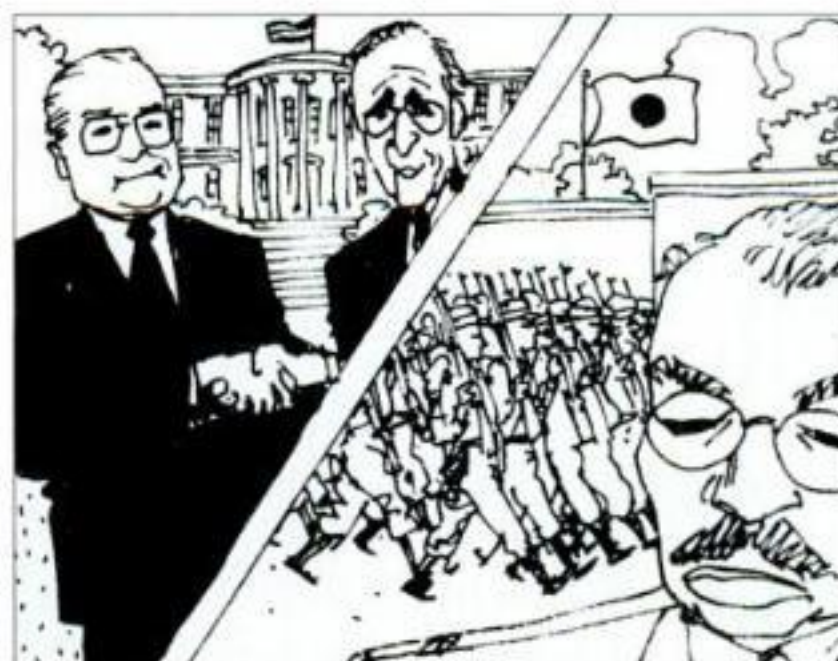
VO: ...while in the other country, everybody got rich and flew to Hawaii for expensive honeymoons, then came to the U.S. and bought Louis Vuitton luggage and designer clothes that regular Americans can't afford.



VO: One country started producing healthy light beers for its American friends, and lowered the prices of its luxury cars.



VO: The other country started shipping massive quantities of strange fish and expecting Americans to eat it, raw.



VO: Germany—or Japan: the choice is yours.



—Art Levine and Sheila Kaplan

A FRIEND WRITES...PRECISELY THE WAY WE TELL HIM TO

Stunning Revelations from Inside The New Yorker

The *New Yorker* stylebook. It is the Talmud of mandarin grammar, a work of heart-pounding significance to professional and home grammarians alike. And yet this celebrated volume

has never been seen by outsiders. In fact, it is so closely held that even some who work at the magazine are denied access. But all that is about to change. Our exclusive report:

In a mere 86 legal-size pages—not including special, handwritten addenda on index cards and scraps of paper—the stylebook defines the magazine's obsessive house style, the unyielding adherence to rules of punctuation and usage that the rest of the English-speaking world long ago discarded.

The book is divided into two parts. The first is the Word List, a glossary that establishes spellings and punctuations (don't forget *The New Yorker's* signature diaereses in *coopérate* and *preëminent*), arbitrates capitalization (it's *Brussels lace*, of course) and runs, in all, to some 2,365 entries. Ethnic slurs are carefully cataloged: *dago*, *frog*, *krout* and *niggra* (the latter denoted as a specifically "southern" term) are lowercased, while *Jerry*, a slur we expect will shortly come back into vogue, must be capitalized.

But don't think *The New Yorker* has been so caught up in continuing to hyphenate *teen-ager* that it has missed the language's passing trends altogether. The Word List is rich with painstakingly spelled twentieth-centuryisms: *grody*; *Hinky dinky*, *parlez-vous*; *hoochy-cooch*; *hubba-hubba*; *Man, the* (*Harlem for cop*); *no-goodnick*; *Oh dear!* (or, "*oh dear*"); *pixilated*; *snugglebunny*; and *whoopsy*. Nor is the stylebook afraid to confront ticklish questions of profanity:

Use "God-damned" as the adjective and "God damn" as the noun for *strong swear word*. If not used as strong oath, use "goddam." [italics theirs]

In case the U.S. ever embarks on another major war, or should Berton Roueché embark on a three-part series on sonar, the copy department will be prepared, since the Word List takes special care to delineate every conceivable martial term and denomination:

A.A.F. (the Army Air Forces)
Air Corps, the (1926–41)

Air Force, the (since July 26, 1947)
Air Force (when the nationality is specified; air force when unspecified)
Air Forces, the Army (1941–47)
Allies, the (First and Second World Wars)
Ally, ally (see "Allies")
A.M.G. (Allied Military Government)
Anschluss, the (Austrian)
Anschluss, an (ital. for general use)
Army (spell out: First Army)
Army Air Forces, the (created June 20, 1941; became the Air Force July 26, 1947)
Army corps (Roman numerals: VI Corps)
AWACS, AWACS
planes (7½ pt. caps)—acronym for Airborne Warning and Control System; plural is AWACS planes
Axis (the German-Italian-Japanese alliance of the Second World War)



And that's just some of the A's.

Then there is the Word List addendum, written on 35 index cards in the crabbed hand of ex-copy chief Mary Norris, listing stores such as I. Miller and Mini Mundos—a reference guide for the annual *New Yorker* Christmas gift suggestions. There are also special-interest lists for music, art, baseball, tennis, Letter from Washington, Korea, Israel, the Middle East, Iran, India, law and golf. Why there are no lists for boxing, the Midwest and Roger Angell's annual Christmas poem ("Greetings, Friends!"), no one can say.

The second half of the stylebook consists of advice peculiar to the magazine, a commentary on various topics of interest to copy editors. The tone is tough and unforgiving—orders from a drill sergeant improbably devoted to Strunk-and-White-style good writing:

"Alright"; "transpire," meaning "happen"; and "gotten," unless dialogue or

country style, are banned.

Do not write "At long last" unless for deliberately obnoxious effect.

Fortunately, the stylebook's commands are not without flashes of donnish wit:

The following style [is] to take effect immediately:

(Translated, from the Spanish, by Rock Hudson.)

(Translated, from the Spanish, by Rock Hudson, in collaboration with Rip Torn.)

(Translated, from the Spanish, by the author and Rock Hudson.)

Most enjoyable of all are the interoffice memos that the copy department has saved for posterity. Here we may eavesdrop on the magazine reveling in its *New Yorker*-ness. One gem is this exchange between Lu Burke, an "O.K.er" (the magazine's idiosyncratic term for copy editor), and former editor William "Mr." Shawn:

April 25, 1979

Mr. Shawn:

A style ruling, please? I wonder what our spelling should be of the slang word for a big laugh or joke. All the dictionaries, even the Wentworth & Flexner slang dictionary, give preference to the spelling "yak" but also list "yock," "yok" and others. Since the slang word "yak" also means "chatter" and has a different pronunciation from the one meaning "laugh," perhaps we ought to spell the laugh one "yock" or "yok." I bring this up because we would ordinarily follow Webster's preference, but Mr. Lorenz [cartoon editor Lee Lorenz] wants the "o" sound, since he changed it in the caption here.

Lu Burke

Miss Burke:

I favor "yock." Let's make it that.
Thank you.

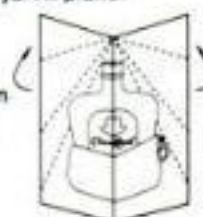
Shawn

Tear along perforated line.



How to make the
Crown Royal Airplane.

1. Fold away from
you along the
center line.



2. Re-open, and
fold corners
as shown.



3. Fold again, and
once again till
Crown and
Royal meet.



4. Fold wings
away from you,
grasp inner
folds, and aim.



This Christmas, send it airmail.

For local destinations, just stop by your nearest liquor store. Or call 1-800-238-4373.

Tear along perforated line.



Crown

Royal

BOOKS



Bret



Binky

HOW BRET ELLIS TURNED MICHAEL KORDA INTO LARRY FLYNT

In its current catalog Simon & Schuster announces the January publication of *American Psycho*, by Bret Easton Ellis. Happily, the catalog mentions that Ellis will do a "five-city reading tour." There really is nothing quite like hearing a poet or splendid prose stylist read from his own work. One can just picture Ellis in the wainscoted upstairs room of Atlanta's or Chicago's or Boston's finest independent bookstore, reading from *American Psycho* in effortless cadences:

I keep spraying Torri with mace and then I try to cut off all of her fingers and finally I pour acid into her vagina which doesn't kill her, so I resort to stabbing her in the throat and eventually the blade of the knife breaks off into what's left of her neck, stuck on bone, so I stop. While Tiffany watches, finally I saw the entire head off—torrents of blood splash against the walls, even the ceiling—and holding the head up, like a prize, I take my cock, purple with stiffness and lowering Torri's head to my lap I push it into her bloodied mouth and start fucking it, until I come.

American Psycho is about a young investment banker who "can't seem to stop killing people—especially young women," as some early promotional material described him. (Simon & Schuster has already begun to backpedal, by changing that last phrase to "women, men, animals" in the catalog. The equal distribution of victimhood is a ridiculous distortion.) Passages like the one quoted above appear on page after page of the book. How did this happen? Why is Simon & Schuster trying to sell a book that pre-

sents sexual violence performed by a young man on young women that is far more horrible than anything in any chainsaw movie?

Certainly, gruesome, sadistic murder is not all there is to the book. In what the catalog calls a "subtle send-up," the novel pokes fun at materialism by mentioning status brand names a dozen times a page—Cristal, Armani, Blaupunkt. Unvaryingly, relentlessly, Ellis introduces each character with a fashion report: "McDermott is wearing a woven-linen suit with pleated trousers, a button-down cotton-and-linen shirt by Basile, a silk tie by Joseph Abboud and Ostrich loafers from Susan Bennis-Warren Edwards." Such telling social commentary notwithstanding, a number of people have some explaining to do.

Michael Korda is the editor in chief of Simon & Schuster, Richard Snyder is the company's chief executive officer, and Amanda "Binky" Urban is Ellis's agent. When these three next dine at Bouley, they should remember that such sentences as "In my locker in the locker room at Xclusive lay three vaginas I recently sliced out of various women I've attacked in the past week" will be helping to pay the check.

Then we have Bob Asahina, Ellis's mild-mannered editor. When Ellis's first draft arrived last December, Asahina says, he asked Ellis to do "a purely structural rewrite that was very minimal." He is completely unapologetic about the content of the book, saying that the violence is entirely justifiable. Further, he claims that there was no debate within Simon & Schuster about going ahead with publication. This does not seem to be true. At the spring 1990 publisher's meeting, during which each

editor introduced the staff to his or her upcoming list, Asahina had to distribute a sample chapter of *American Psycho*. He chose the one in which the hero hooks a woman's nipples to jumper cables. Reaction was violently negative, particularly among S&S women, who mounted an impassioned campaign urging the publishing house to reject the book. "There are serial killers and there are serial killers," says one female staffer. "I mean, for God's sake, even Ted Bundy just raped and strangled people and tossed them in the woods." In the end, these efforts were unavailing.

Asahina's excuse for going ahead is this: he has already paid Ellis \$300,000, so killing the book would mean taking an unpalatable \$300,000 loss. The investment is still risky; if Simon & Schuster sells all 40,000 copies of the first printing of *American Psycho*, it should only break even, and Penguin has declined to exercise its paperback reprint rights.

As for Ellis, he painted himself into this career corner. To perpetuate his 12 minutes of fame, he had to do something. He couldn't write the same book for a third time, and evidently he couldn't actually write a book that would earn attention on its merits, so he chose a course that will inevitably cause controversy and get him lots of press and allow him to pontificate, kind of like the novelist and critic Leo Tolstoi, on the question What is Art? *I am purposely exaggerating the way yuppie men treat women. That's the point, he will say. I meant to convey the madness of the consumerist eighties.* Not much could be more sickening than the misogynist barbarism of this novel, but almost as repellent will be Ellis's callow cynicism as he justifies it.

—Todd Stiles

Simon &
Schuster women
mounted an
impassioned
campaign urging
the publisher
to reject

American Psycho

THE INDUSTRY



Sid



Marty

NICE GUYS FINISH LAST: BEHIND THE PARAMOUNT PURGE

Contrary to rumor and press reports, Sid Ganis, until this fall copresident of production at Paramount Pictures, was not edged out by his young, Barry Diller-ish new number two, David Kirkpatrick. Nor was he really sacked by his boss, Frank Mancuso. The dismissal was the doing of his Manhattan-based overlord Marty "That's Martin!" Davis, the Machiavellian chairman of Paramount Communications [*Editors' note: SPY has had discussions with Paramount, at the studio's behest, about a possible joint venture*].

It takes 18 months or more to make a picture. Ganis had the Paramount job less than two years. It's simply too early to judge him intelligently. And the evidence so far has not been unencouraging: Paramount's market share this year is about 14 percent, second only to Disney's. *Ghost*, one of his pictures, was the biggest movie of the summer. It should clear at least \$70 million in profits—more than all of Paramount Communications has been earning each quarter.

Ganis also made some flops, including *Harlem Nights* and *Days of Thunder*. (*The Two Jakes* was a bomb, but it was a Mancuso bomb that happened to go off under Ganis.) And Ganis never seemed quite like an authentic Hollywood chieftain—he was insufficiently sharklike. He wasn't, as one leading agent put it post-purge, "competitive." He allowed Davis and Mancuso to walk all over him. After Mancuso ordered Ganis to hold the line on costs, Ganis told Tom Cruise he would pay him \$5 million to star in *Days of Thunder*, not the \$8 million Cruise was demanding. Cruise protested, Ganis held firm, Mancuso folded, Cruise got \$8 million, and Ganis looked foolish.

Along the way, Ganis made enemies of producers Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer, de facto powers at Paramount. They negotiated their extraordinarily rich new multipicture deal directly with Mancuso and Davis. Remember the hellish full-page ads announcing the deal that ran in newspapers nationwide? Simpson and Bruckheimer demanded them, and Davis said yes.

Paramount has put out the word that Ganis was fired because he couldn't control costs, had lousy relations with talent and lacked production experience. He certainly was guilty of fiscal looseness. But Ganis generally got along fine with talent—even with Eddie Murphy, although not well enough for Murphy to stop demanding \$20 million per picture (he now makes \$10 million to \$12 million). As George Lucas's right-hand man during the age of *Star Wars*, Ganis did a little producing, but so what? Terry Semel at Warners and Tom Pollock at Universal, to name two studio chiefs, were never line producers.

The real problem was that back in New York, Davis had got scared. Paramount stock languishes at around \$36 a share, about half of what it was last January. Although meanspirited, Davis is an extremely able CEO who transformed a sinking sugar-and-car-parts conglomerate into a big money-maker. But then, pandering to Wall Street's 1980s enthusiasm for show business stocks, Davis last year sold off his financial-services division and renamed his company Paramount Communications—virtually seconds before Wall Street tired of the communications fad.

Moreover, Davis has to answer to investors who don't understand the movie business. A logical manager might figure

that Paramount was lucky to exploit Simpson and Bruckheimer and Eddie Murphy early in their careers, when they were inexpensive and very successful, and should drop them now that they are grotesquely expensive and unsuccessful. But Wall Street has heard of Eddie Murphy and Simpson and Bruckheimer, and would be nervous if they left Paramount. So even though it's insane, Davis has to keep his famous egomaniacs happy. And he needs to look tough and take-charge.

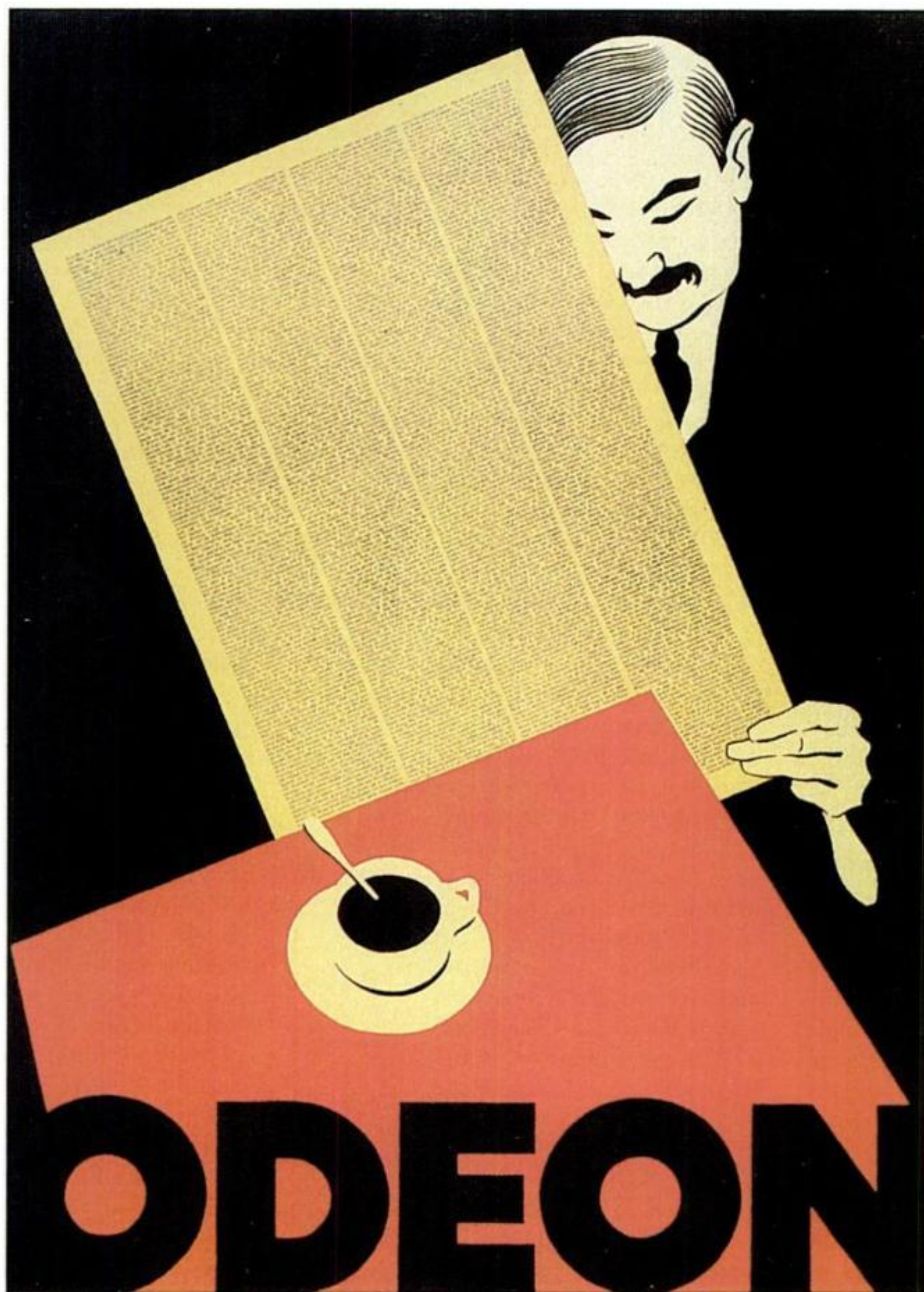
Nobody in New York had heard of Ganis. He was therefore expendable. History suggests others—*Hello, Mr. Kirkpatrick? Mr. Davis calling*—may prove expendable, too, even though Kirkpatrick is considerably more adept at office politics than Ganis. He is pals with Simpson and Bruckheimer. From his first days on the lot last summer, Kirkpatrick was telling agents and producers, apparently with backing from Mancuso, to ignore Ganis, that the guy was on his way out. The power struggle described in newspaper reports was, in fact, a sham: Kirkpatrick arrived, evidently, with the promise of Ganis's job, and by the time Ganis figured that out, the contest was over.

By the way, because Davis, Ganis and Simpson are all former publicists (Simpson now leaves the dirty work to Peggy Siegal, the Cruella de Ville of Hollywood flacks), the press coverage of the shake-up has been worth watching. *The Wall Street Journal* tells the story as Davis and Simpson see it; *Variety* and *Premiere* seem to be Kirkpatrick's; the *Los Angeles Times* is pro-Ganis; and *The New York Times* has slept through the whole affair.

See you Monday night at Mortons.

—Celia Brady

The power
struggle
described in
newspaper
reports was, in
fact, a sham



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Eric



Edward R.

LARGE AND IN CHARGE: ERIC

OBER IS A TOAD TO BE RECKONED WITH

one at that—in Larry Tisch's master plan to convert the Tiffany Network into a mutual fund. While Ober's previous job was running the network's five owned-and-operated local stations, most of his 24 years at CBS have been spent toiling away in the news division, and thus the remaining heirs to the Ed Murrow tradition have reflexively welcomed Ober as one of their own: a real journalist—indeed, a card-carrying member of the Writers Guild. But judging from his record, Ober may more accurately be described as a "suit" in journalist's clothing.

Known around the network as the Toad—perhaps as much for his physical appearance as for his canny ability to tell superiors precisely what they want to hear—Ober began his CBS career in the publicity department but soon wangled a job as a news producer at the network's New York City affiliate, where he quickly endeared himself to Ed Joyce, the station's news director, and was taken under his wing.

In 1978 the Velvet Shiv, as the mild-mannered, pink-slip-dealing Joyce came to be known, left New York and was named general manager of WBBM, the CBS-owned affiliate in Chicago. Ober was brought along to run the station's news department. Joyce instructed his charge to pay special attention to the station's anchormen, Bill Kurtis and Walter Jacobsen. Ober did this by gathering up the news staff and explaining that *Bill and Walter are the only ones who matter here. Everyone else is chopped liver!*

Aside from demoralizing his staff, Ober is remembered in the Windy City for practically scrapping WBBM's local political coverage, a decision he made because he generally found local politics to be boring. Right idea, wrong city: local politics *are* boring—everywhere but Chicago. Thus Ober's newscast was continually scooped by the ABC and NBC affiliates, each of whom employed a full-time political reporter.

Back east, Van Gordon Sauter was busy as president of CBS News, trying, among other things, to rid the place once and for all of Murrow's ghost. In 1981, Sauter brought Joyce back to New York and deputized him to be the executive vice president of CBS News, where his main task was to be the dismantling of numerous journalistic enterprises. To help him, Joyce nurtured apprentice hitmen like unctuous Howard Stringer (now CBS Broadcast Group president) and Eric Ober. They were touted as the type of "video-fluent" Young Turks who could save the network, yet both spoke contemptuously of the people who had built it. The mere mention of Bill Moyers's name, for example, would cause Ober to roll his eyes.

Perhaps the clearest measure of Ober was the speed with which he distanced himself from his good, good friend as soon as Joyce was purged after rising to the news-division presidency. Sauter came back to run the division, and it was assumed that he would soon sack Ober. But before his mentor's chair had cooled, Ober was heard making remarks like *Ed Joyce—what can you do with a guy like that?* Thus did Ober ingratiate himself with his new overlords.

And now the Toad himself sits in the hot seat, one that holds about as much

job security as does the position of manager of the New York Yankees. Already some grumblers have pointed out that many of the early triumphs credited to Ober's watch—the *Evening News's* 22 percent ratings surge during the early days of the Persian Gulf crisis, the network's not wholly bad version of *Nightline*—are projects initiated under his immediate predecessor, David Burke. In fact, just days before Burke got the ax, CBS had prepared a major promotional campaign to flaunt its new, Persian-Gulf-crisis-fueled ratings; but when Burke left, the network's de facto CEO, senior vice president Jay Kriegel, pulled the print ads and had the campaign scrapped, fearful that Burke might actually get posthumous credit for something.

Meanwhile, Elsewhere in the Several Acres of Manhattan Where All Network News Is Created: The management of NBC News has become so haphazard and panicky that executives now simply pray

for the occasional medical *deus ex machina* to save them. First there was the widespread hope that when Joe Garagiola left *Today* for a month to recover from prostate surgery, he would get it in his head to retire permanently (after just three disastrous months on the job). And for some time the question has been not whether Deborah Norville will leave *Today* but precisely how and when. News president Mike Gartner was apparently just days

away from biting the bullet and removing her from the show when, late last summer, she announced she was pregnant; now the desperate hope is that motherhood will give Norville and Gartner a mutually face-saving way to recast *Today*, with Katie Couric taking over for Norville. —Laureen Hobbs

The mere mention of Bill Moyers's name would cause Ober to roll his eyes



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Judy



Max



he *One, by One, by One* controversy—the latest in a series of episodes involving editor Judy Miller and her unsteady grasp of journalistic integrity—rages on: Judy has vowed vengeance on David Walton, the man whose remarkable *Philadelphia Inquirer* review of her book on the Holocaust alleged that she had cribbed a passage practically verbatim from a one-volume encyclopedia (see this space, September). *No ordinary book reviewer could write so malicious a tract, Judy was heard to have screamed. There's got to be a reason for his anger, a conflict of interest of some kind, and damn it, I'm going to find out what it is!*

Miller is not a bad reporter and is quite capable of carrying out her threat. Rather, it's as an ethicist, editor and office maneuverer that she falls short. Her penchant for braggadocio moved her to refer to herself, when she was shipped out of Washington to become deputy media editor in New York, as *the* media editor—which is in fact the title of her superior Marty Arnold. Indeed, Judy let on that she would soon be edging Arnold out of his job. But Arnold is a vigorous *Times* survivor, an old hand adept at the Borgia-like office politics peculiar to the *Times*, and the job remains his.

The latest episode in the Judy saga involves a curious story headlined CRISIS IN IRAQ INSPIRES SPATE OF BOOKS, which ran in September in the book pages of the daily *Times*—pages that she, as deputy media editor, oversaw. Roger Cohen, the newish media reporter, opened his story by saying that Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait had prompted a "stampede... among book publishers [eager] to cash in on his notoriety."

But the first seven paragraphs revealed only that Pantheon Books was reissuing in paperback a book on Iraq that had been published in hardcover by the University of California last year and that had sold only a few hundred copies.

It gets better: in the *Times* article's final seven paragraphs, Cohen quoted three major publishing executives—Bantam's Stuart Applebaum, Simon & Schuster's Dick Snyder and Henry Holt's Bruno Quinson—as saying their houses had no plans at all to rush Iraq-related titles onto the market, and that they didn't foresee any in the near future; Applebaum and Snyder were particularly emphatic that such books would be ridiculously premature.

So what's all this about a stampede, then? Well, evidently there was *one* new Iraq book being rushed out, according to the article's middle two paragraphs. The new book had no title or publication date at the time Cohen's piece ran. Its coauthor is, however, none other than Judy Miller—*our* Judy Miller!—who, when not showing up at public events on the arm of *Nightline*'s Jeff Greenfield (as ever: media editor, media dates), enjoys an on-again, off-again relationship with Jason Epstein, editorial director of Random House, which, of course, owns both Pantheon and Times Books. Times Books has no connection with the *Times*—but is the publisher of Judy's volume. Miller, a former Cairo correspondent for the paper, hastily assembled the book during a three-week vacation.

Simon & Schuster, which published *One, by One, by One*, may well have been surprised by this news. And even Random House's top brass were less than pleased with Cohen's dressed-up preview

of Judy's instant book; Steve Wasserman, the editor who had been pulling all-nighters to get the manuscript ready, did not want the added pressure of overwrought public expectations, and his overseers tried to get Cohen not to write the piece. Someone in the *Times*'s media section evidently could not be swayed.

A couple of weeks after the story appeared, a terse memo was posted on the *Times*'s newsroom bulletin board, announcing that Judith Miller would henceforth serve as a New York-based Middle East-beat reporter—effectively a temporary demotion. The memo made no mention of her having been deputy media editor up until the day before.

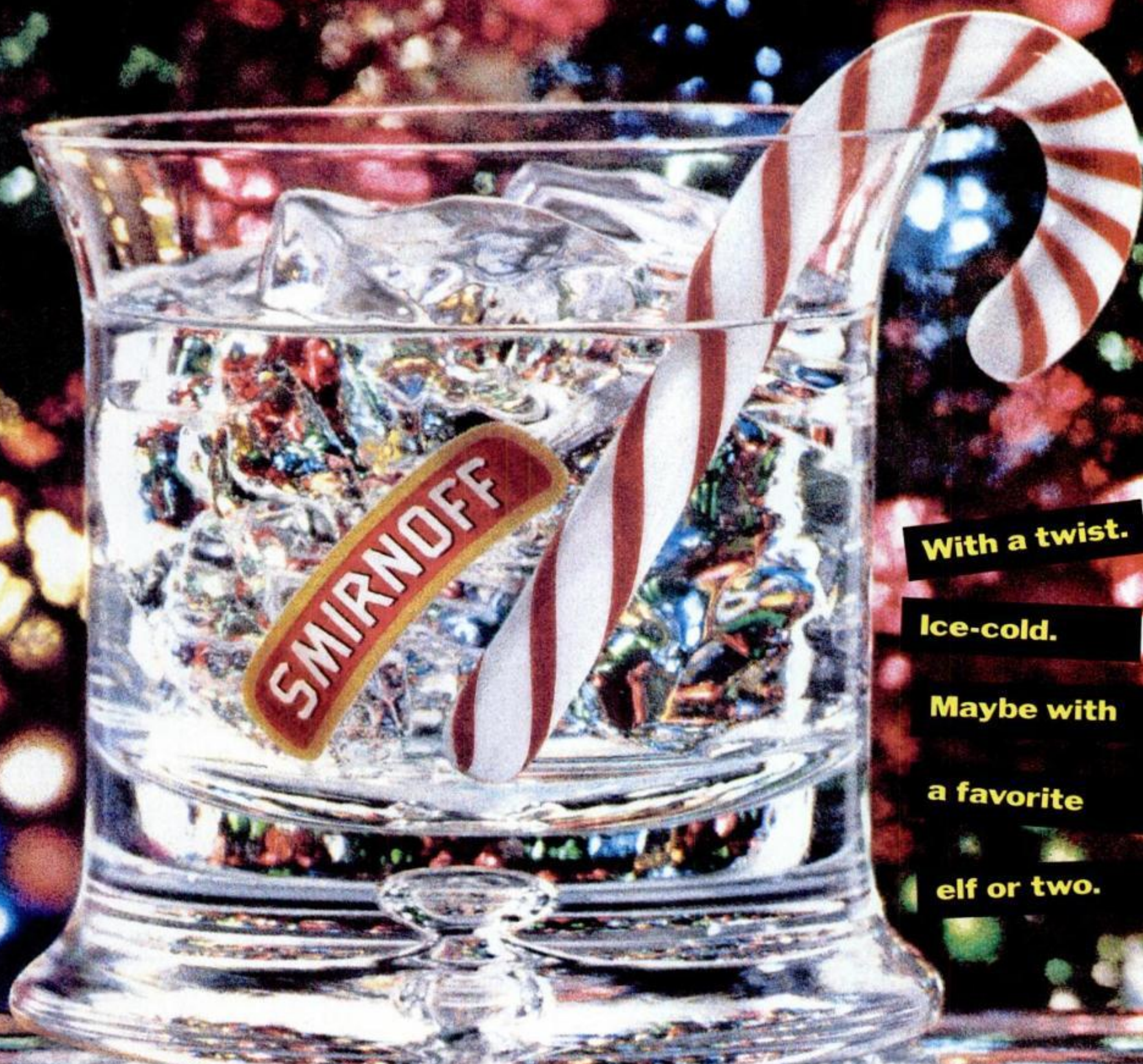
Judy is not the only new high-priced reporter at the *Times* these days. The recent hirings of John Tierney, Karen De Witt and Dean Baquet—capable, pedigreed journalists all—should do plenty to improve the paper's reportage, but their \$75,000-to-\$90,000 salaries have served only to discourage capable, pedigreed 10- and 15-year *Times* veterans who are earning just two-thirds as much.

At least the *Times*'s minority employees can rest assured that no matter how bleak the paper's financial outlook becomes, they will be kept on—even if it's against their will. Education reporter Lee Daniels learned all about racial quotas when he was offered a prestigious Alicia Patterson Fellowship earlier this year. He was eager to accept—the fellowship would have paid him half a year's salary—but the *Times* was reluctant to grant him a leave. Daniels, you see, is black, and the *Times* had already surrendered a black reporter, Tom Morgan, to a Neiman Fellowship at Harvard.

—J. J. Hunsecker

Miller referred
to herself
as the media
editor—the title
of her superior
Marty Arnold

**A creature was stirring,
but it wasn't the mouse.**



With a twist.

Ice-cold.

Maybe with

a favorite

elf or two.

Amoeba

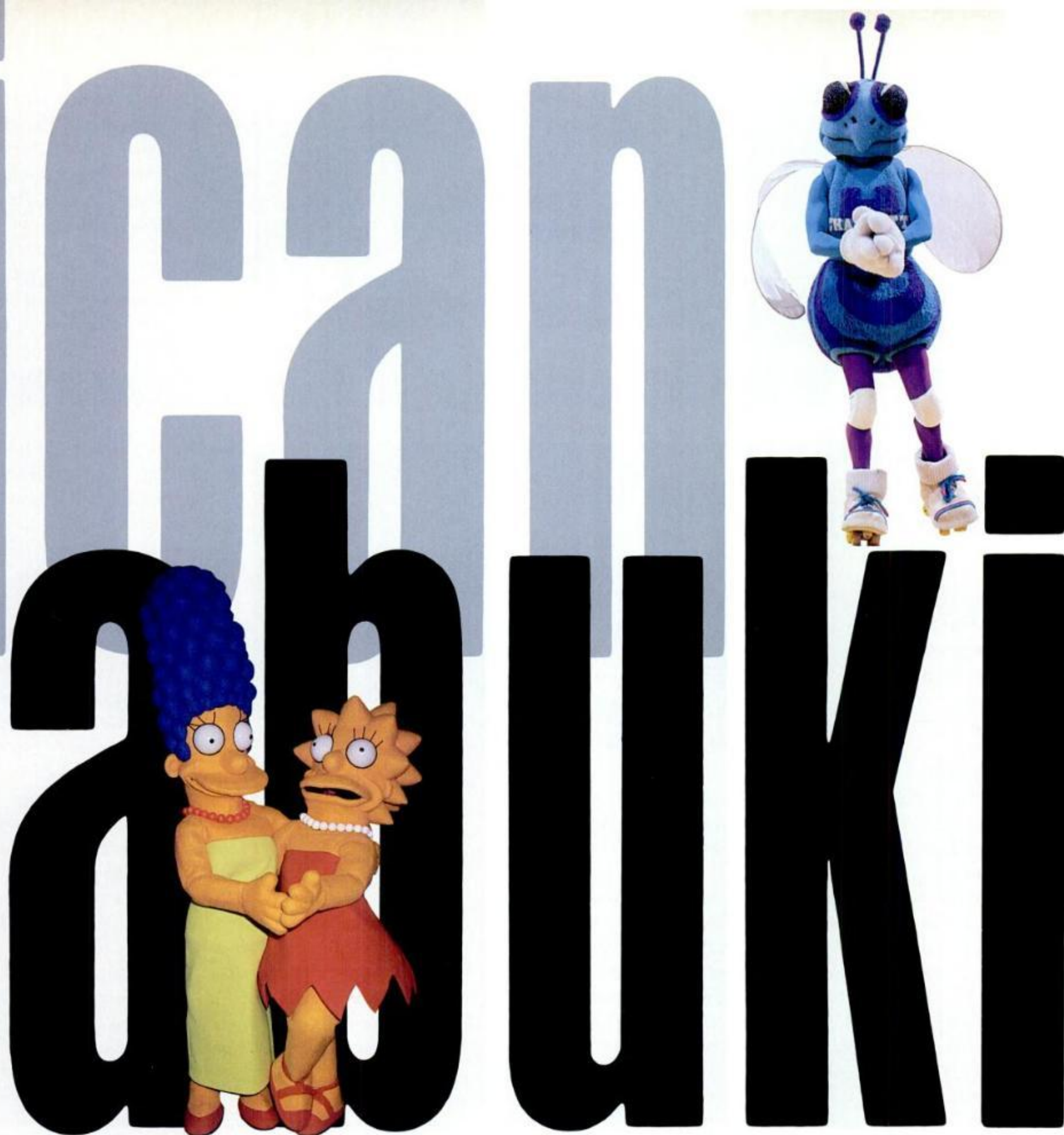


K

Celebrating the Underappreciated American Art of

THERE ARE PITFALLS TO WALKING THROUGH MIDTOWN MANHATTAN DRESSED AS A GIANT WHITE RABBIT. There's the heat, of course, and the stares of pedestrians who find it amusing to squeeze your tail, pull on your ears and make bad jokes about the sexual proclivity of your kind. For any serious performer in a large furry suit—or at least any serious performer in a large furry suit who is willing to run a gauntlet of grim-faced messengers and cabbies—such trials are the cost of doing business. Besides, these hazards pale when compared with the perks of big-time furry-suited success: the highly elaborate costumes, the adrenaline rush of the evening's first pratfall, the adoration of children and, in the case of sports mascots, the adulation of drunk, cheering fans.

But for some performers—like Rapid T. Rabbit—there are no headlines, no tossed flowers, no stadiums full of cheering, beery yahoos. Rabbit (né Richard Concepcion of Queens) draws no salary for producing and hosting his



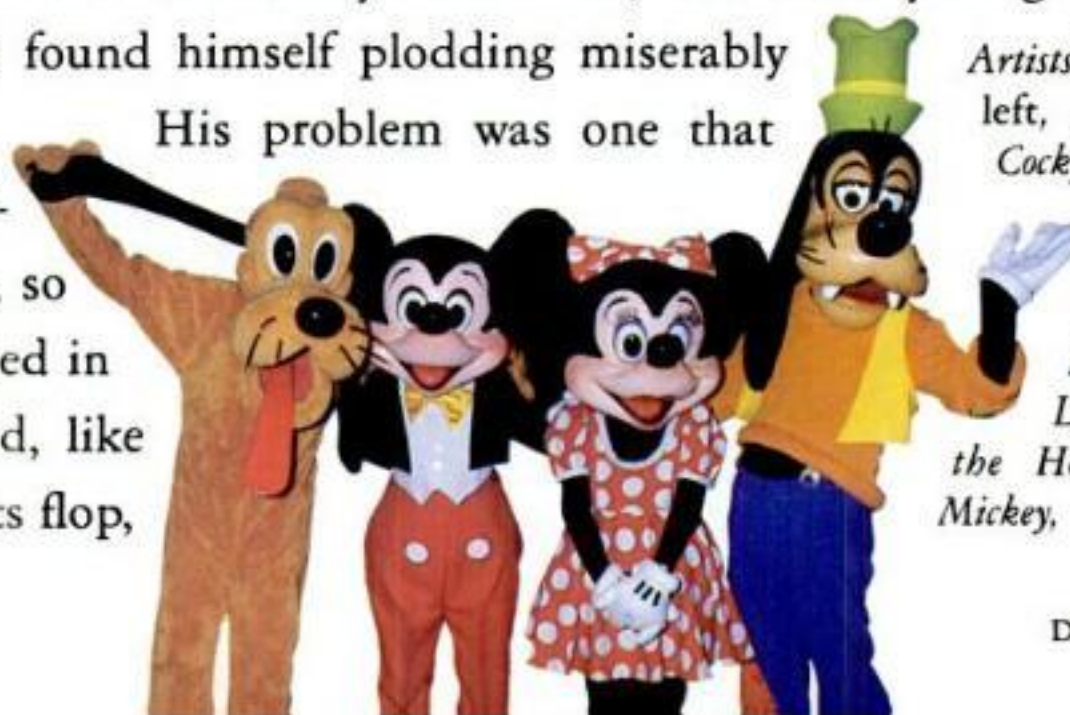
Performing in Really Large, Furry Costumes *by Ned Zeman*

biweekly puppet show on a public-access cable-television channel. He has no health plan and no fan club. "Being a giant rabbit," he says, shattering the childhood fantasies of so many Americans, "is not always as great as it sounds."

One bright, muggy summer afternoon, Rabbit found himself plodding miserably through the city's mean streets with his camera crew.

any performer would have a hard time overcoming: his costume was awful. The head was too big, so when Rabbit tried to board a city bus, it got wedged in the doorway. The head turned all the way around, like Linda Blair's in *The Exorcist*, and the right ear lost its flop,

His problem was one that



Artists Under Fur: from left, the Pink Panther; Cocky the Gamecock; a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle; the short-lived Yankee Dandy; Marge and Lisa Simpson; Hugo the Hornet; and Pluto, Mickey, Minnie and Goofy

sagging along Rabbit's head like a cheap toupee. By the end of the day, Rabbit looked more like some kind of mutant water rat than like a cheerful bunny. And so it was not surprising that when Rabbit approached a small boy on the sidewalk in Central Park, the child burst into tears.

Why, then, does he do it? What compels him to wake up each day and ceremoniously put on 40 pounds of synthetic rabbit fur?

The theater.



says actress Fran Gennuso of Long Island, who wore the huge Homer suit that day. "It's like a frenzy. You know—they believe in us." And that, really, is the key to the whole American

As the trailblazing San Diego Chicken is fond of saying, "I want the Chicken to super

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, every great culture has made its own singular, profound contribution to the performing arts. The Greeks gave us classical drama. The French, ballet. The Germans—well, the Germans gave us a beer dance in lederhosen called the *Schuhplattlertanz*.

But what about America? What is the singularly American art form, the indigenous method of expression that says to the world, and to history, *Experience this art form, and you will have experienced America?*

It is, of course, American Kabuki—the art of performing in big, furry costumes. Could the Belgians or the Russians have come up with *Muppet Babies Live* or Houston's Booster the Rocket? Of course not.

Like all great things American, the American Kabuki tradition is pluralistic: it is a giant bumblebee drumming up business outside a midwestern honey-fried-chicken franchise; it is the front half of a skating dragon in the Ice Capades; it is Willie Win One, the whitish, amoeboid mascot of the Minnesota U.S. Olympic Festival; it is *Sesame Street*'s lumbering Snuffleupagus.

"A lot of people may be able to be an okay mascot, but a select few have what it takes to be an outstanding mascot, a great mascot," explains Wayne Harrison of Harrison/Erickson, a Brooklyn-based company that has designed many of the most prominent professional-sports mascots. Think of Harrison as the Ralph Lauren of the enormous-fuzzy-head realm. "It takes warmth and humor and talent. It takes timing and polish. You could say it's a calling."

You could indeed. And in the United States today, the number of American Kabuki performers has soared. An ad placed recently in *The Village Voice* asking to hear from people who had ever performed in giant costumes elicited an overwhelming number of phone messages like "Please call Mr. Bubbles at work" and "Hi! It's the Gorilla."

American Kabuki has touched the life of almost every U.S. citizen. And not just easily stimulated midwesterners. Even in New York, American Kabuki performers are treated like royalty (the few exceptions—such as Rapid T. Rabbit—notwithstanding). The day the gigantic Simpsons characters visited the Tots 'n' Tykes counter at Macy's, they were mobbed. "When we dress up like this, we become like rock stars,"



Lights! Camera! Sweat!: clockwise from left, cable TV's Rapid T. Rabbit; Sylvester, Foghorn Leghorn, Tweety Bird, Daffy Duck, Yosemite Sam and Bugs Bunny at Great Adventure, the Schwab's Drugstore of American Kabuki; Bert and Ernie, having traded in their ballet leotards to do *Sesame Street Live with Dancing Corn*

Kabuki phenomenon. Only in the United States is there enough wonderful cockeyed idealism to *believe*, way deep down, that towering, three-dimensional cartoon characters are real.

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY PRECISELY who is American Kabuki material. Though the most illustrious tend to be trained dancers and gymnasts and wear costumes that cost up to \$10,000, many—at least in the lower rungs of the profession—are just well-intentioned people looking

for summer work. They all have one thing in common, however: they are *people* people. And once inside a big furry suit, even the most reticent among them are transformed into people unafraid, even proud, to lift their legs on umpires or to force two-for-one coupons on pedestrians outside Roy Rogers or to make obscene pelvic gyrations at innocent teenage ball girls or to fill in the OCCUPATION blank on their tax returns with "Goofy."

Like most artists, American Kabuki performers have a knack for philosophical explorations of their craft. Twenty-six-year-old Jerry H. has been playing Cocky, the red-feathered mascot of the University of South Carolina Gamecocks, for six years because, he says, "It's what I was put on this earth to do. It's a gift, and it would be a shame not to use it. The question shouldn't be, Why do you want to be Cocky? The question should be, Why *wouldn't* I want to be Cocky?"

Well, for a few reasons. First of all, American Kabuki performers still don't always get all the appreciation they deserve. Nobody seems to remember the day in 1985 when, without the brave efforts of a man dressed as a chicken, federal marshals would have been unable to arrest 100 Washington, D.C., fugitives. Deputy U.S. Marshal Tom "Mickey" Spilane impersonated the renowned San Diego

Chicken as part of a sting operation in which wanted men were lured to a hotel with the promise of free Redskins tickets. Spilane's mother was unimpressed. Then there's the sad tale of Lotta-Bull, a Rockville, Maryland, performer who was arrested earlier this year just trying to make ends meet by doing some promotion for a local roast-beef restaurant. But the law said Lotta-Bull was — this is difficult to repeat — *an illegal outdoor sign*, and they slapped a \$75 fine on the restaurant's owner.

sede the man"

Even for mascots in the professional-sports world (the Broadway of American Kabuki), life isn't all lunches

in a front booth at the Russian Tea Room. In the mid-eighties the New York Yankees hired a mascot, Yankee Dandy, a pear-shaped and mustachioed "human" who wore shag-carpeting pinstripes. But because George Steinbrenner refused to let him onto the playing field — one goofily dressed "human" was presumably enough — Dandy was forced to wander through the upper stands alone among woozy, sociopathic baseball fans who, according to Wayne Harrison, repeatedly "jostled" him. After three sad years, Yankee Dandy was retired.

Then there's the biggest occupational hazard of all, the one you hear about again and again from furry-costumed professionals, big and small: heat. Infernal heat. Imagine wearing, as a typical American Kabuki artist does, 35 pounds of plastic, rubber, netting, feathers, fake fur and foam over your entire body. Imagine wearing all that *and* oversize stuffed feet and hands and a head the size of a beer keg, a head that has no real eyes, allowing you to see only through a little hole in or near the mouth. Now imagine wearing all that while sprinting through the bowels of Penn Station in August, and you begin to grasp the level of unpleasantness.

"It's sheer hell," says New York actor Joey McNeely, who played a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle in a Pizza Hut commercial. "The heat makes you sick, and you want to die." Performers, he says, "should be paid millions for such agony."

Whether they make six-figure salaries — as perhaps three or four do — or \$3.80 an hour, all American Kabuki performers abide by the same five fundamental rules of their craft:

1. *Never speak.* Though this rule is sacred, there are a couple of exceptions: it can be broken in times of emergencies, as when a few years ago the Philadelphia Phillie Phanatic's motorbike spilled gasoline in the stands and, to the stunned stares of hundreds, he yelled, "Don't light any cigarettes!" The rule is also regularly broken, as many rules are, by big-name celebrities with TV and film careers, such as Big Bird and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (artistic heirs to the Banana Splits).

2. *Never remove your head in public* — an egregious sin Wayne Harrison describes in more technical



The author

FURRY LIKE ME

A SPY Reporter Goes Undercover to Attend America's Mascot Boot Camp

When SPY decided to probe American Kabuki, we knew that any study would leave us at arm's length from the actual experience. To close that gap, reporter JOHN BRODIE traveled to East Tennessee State University in sweltering Johnson City, where he attended the Universal Cheerleaders Association's mascot camp and studied the fundamentals of cheerleading alongside 80 top college mascots. His costume? The SPY Pit Bull, of course. Here is his report.

Mascot camp started with a ritual familiar to any veteran of student orientation: *Tell us a little bit about yourself.* "My daddy took me to my first 'Bama game, and I fell in love with Big Al," began a spindly fellow who was Big Al from 'Bama, the elephant who cheers on the University of Alabama's Crimson Tide.* "I turned to my daddy and said, 'When I grow up I want to be Big Al.'" Normally the occupational dreams of childhood are not binding — otherwise, the world would be filled with cowboys and ballerinas — but no further rationale seemed to have been necessary to persuade this fellow to put on a velour suit and behave like Dumbo on Benzedrine. I glanced around the room, expecting to see skepticism, but I saw only solemn nods of agreement. One girl wiped a tear from her eye.

I had assumed, frankly, that my fellow campers would be a collection of losers making a desperate effort for peer acceptance by agreeing to weekly public humiliation. I was wrong. While some were there out of devotion to their school, the overwhelming majority of my fellow campers seemed to be motivated by the pursuit of money and, astonishingly, sex. The attainment of full scholarships, physical-education credits, varsity letters and cheerleaders seemed to provide the impetus for a great many of the NCAA's most beloved creatures.

Following orientation we had a break. It was soon apparent that famous mascots, such as Albert the Alligator of the University of Florida, or veteran campers with special talents were accorded automatic respect. In the case of Zippy, a kangaroo from the University of Akron who wears a fraternity-pledge beanie, other factors contributed: Zippy, a finalist in the College Cheerleading National Championship that year, brought his own anatomically correct Inflate-a-Mate.

From the beginning we learned that at mascot camp, names are a useless human affectation: you *are* your mascot, and you're addressed as such. For example, you would hear, *Hey, Hokie Bird, do you wanna go to McDonald's?* or *Did the Wildcat get any last night?* Before long, *Hey, Pit Bull* salutations filled the air. As with the young Lord Greystoke, my sense of identity began to erode, and I felt at home.

The creature in charge of our reeducation was once Shasta, the University of Houston Cougar. His human name was Coach Greg Hicks, but he told us to call him the World. Hicks, a big but not especially well toned fellow who spoke in a soft, Michael Jackson-esque voice, spends the winters supervising the mascot program at Houston, writing articles for *Cheer News Today* and gearing up for

*The mascots depicted in this story were those who performed during the 1989-90 athletic season. Any similarities between the behavior of these and current mascots are strictly coincidental.



A Mascot Yalta?: Zippy Jr., the Hairy Dawg and Duke Dog with an inflatable friend

the summer camps where he supervises the instruction of the nation's leading mascots. He began by teaching us "The Mascot Dos and Don'ts" (including "Do: Drink plenty of fluids" and "Don't: Be the ham in someone else's sandwich"—that is, interrupt an important school ceremony or cheerleading stunt) before working on walking. A lot of personality has to be conveyed through the walk. We mulled over the University of Connecticut Husky's problems: "I want to be a tough Husky, but I also want to be lovable. How do I do that in a walk?" He eventually resolved his dilemma by focusing on his warmer side.



Man's Best Friend: a tender heart 'neath the tough hide

"Um umgawa, the Husky's got the power," we cheered as he performed his lovable walk during evaluations.

Next we practiced skits, sideline clowning and dance routines, all building up to the culmination of our week at camp, a big production number called Mascot Follies. But before that came a key test: we had to appear at a local day-care center. There, 20 preschoolers would be besieged by 40 mascots, all attempting to attract the toddlers' attention without scaring them. Things went poorly; the frightened children clung to one another and howled in terror as we ran toward them. I was happy when a four-year-old girl overcame her fear of my wolfish exterior and stroked my head.

Back at the dorm, I was privy to an ugly side of mascot life that I wish I had not seen. Two mascots had spotted the Kentucky Wildcat with his headpiece off while he was talking to some cheerleaders—a clear violation of the rules. They argued about whether to tell the World, which would certainly have damaged the Wildcat's chances of winning Best Mascot at evaluations. The Anderson Raven, a fat, churlish boy, threatened to rat the Wildcat out.

His efforts got him blackballed; no one would trade with him at the big T-shirt swap, even after he pandered to our worst instincts by mooning some cheerleaders. When this gesture failed to make him one of the gang, he began whining, "What's the matter? You guys got something against small Christian liberal-arts colleges in the Midwest?" Then he got mad and actually yelled, "I'll show you. I am going to lose weight, become a famous mascot, then return next summer and not trade with anyone, especially stuck-up people from big schools."

As Mascot Follies neared, I was drafted into a group of dog mascots, and for our skit we decided to perform an elaborate pantomime set to Tone Lōc's "Funky Cold Medina." During the skit four bulldogs—Georgia's Hairy Dawg, the Gardner-Webb Bulldog, the Northeast Missouri State Bulldog and the SPY Pit Bull—pretended to pass a thermos of love potion from one to another, each of us then dancing to indicate that the aphrodisiac had kicked in. While that was happening the Governor from Austin Peay pretended to be a rapper. When the Governor lip-synched Tone Lōc's musical punchline, "And he did the wild thing on my leg," we dogs scampered up and lifted our legs at him.

We were, to my mind unaccountably, a huge hit. The experience was intoxicating—a feeling that intensified during the finale, when all 80 of us came bounding onto the Astroturf in full costume. Lions, tigers, bears, gamecocks, wolves, bulldogs, wildcats, 'gators, a leprechaun, a spider, a paladin and one pit bull all perfectly executed a tricky synchronized routine. Then, as Barbra Streisand's "The Way We Were" played, we hugged and blew kisses to the crowd. Peering out of my noseholes, I saw cheerleaders hugging and crying, and I felt a rush of melancholy. While the furry creatures embracing me would soon be dancing on the sidelines during football games, I would be in my apartment watching my new best friends on television, left with nothing but memories and a big dog head. ☺

terms as "unheading the mascot." This confuses and terrorizes children and certain adults. When giant Bart Simpson unheaded in a hallway at Macy's recently, one small girl became agitated and had to be removed by her mother.

3. *Never reveal your real identity, particularly when in costume.* This destroys the American Kabuki mystique. Stars such as Big Bird (Carroll Spinney) and the San Diego Chicken (Ted Giannoulas) have been forced by intense media scrutiny to reveal their names, but they refuse to be photographed without their costumes. Explains the Chicken, "I want the Chicken to supersede the man."

4. *Be an optimist.*

5. *Don't just play the character; become the character.* This is key.

LIKE THE REST OF SHOW BUSINESS, AMERICAN Kabuki has its entry-level roles. Whereas the struggling thespian might be doing *The Fantasticks* in a Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, dinner theater, the novice furry performer is generally a part-timer earning date money handing out promotional leaflets for a local business. At this level, costumes may be little more than a nubby union suit and a papier-mâché mask, and physical grace is less important than sheer endurance. Many beginners give up. Just as dozens of young writers and artists each year abandon the dream and go to law school, young American Kabuki performers often leave the field to pursue more stable, orthodox careers—such as acting on the stage or in major motion pictures. After getting off to a promising start padding around Smyrna, Georgia, in a bear suit for a local pizza parlor, Julia Roberts threw it all away. And before deciding

on a life in the theater, playwright Aaron Sorkin (*A Few Good Men*) was

paid \$25 to dress up as a large moose and hand out fliers at the New York Sports Show.

Only a handful of beginners endure, and they're the ones with vision. Take Richard Concepcion, by day a control engineer for Manhattan Cable Television, by night Rapid T. Rabbit in front of the cable camera. The 33-year-old Concepcion broke into American Kabuki doing stunts as a Care Bear and as Paddington Bear. "I wanted to do this puppet show," he says, "because I'm into the entertainment industry. But I knew I needed a hook, so I developed Rapid T. Rabbit, as in *rapid transit*—get it? It's a play on words. Anyway, I realized this was quite a thing, being a rabbit. I'm going to be in the Pasadena Doo Dah Parade, you know. I've stuck with it for four years, and I hope to develop Rabbit into something bigger. I think there's room for advancement in this field."

There is. The next stratum in the American Kabuki hierarchy is that of the professional cartoon-

"Get the fuck away"

character personifier, sometimes known as a Walk-about and usually employed at a theme park — Bugs Bunny and Yosemite Sam at Six Flags and Great Adventure, the *Peanuts* gang at Knott's Berry Farm and, of course, Mickey and Goofy and now the Muppets at the Disney venues. These performers are generally better trained and are more adept at tricky ensemble work. They lip-synch. They do the Charleston. They carpool. They encourage tourists to spend money (Disney World sells special autograph books for all of the park's characters to sign). They are very much like Tom Benton, the 23-year-old unofficial dean of mascots at New Jersey's Great Adventure Amusement Park, a sort of home away from home for larger-than-life Warner Bros. characters. On one typical afternoon not long ago, Benton, a Bugs Bunny specialist who has honed his craft over four and a half years, stood in the park's cramped dressing room trying to explain his technique while a small army of other partially costumed characters caroused around him.

"Has anyone seen my damn head?" asked an un-headed Yosemite Sam. (This, it should be noted, was not a violation of American Kabuki Rule No. 2, because Sam was among his professional peers, not the public.)

"It's over by the feet," responded Foghorn Leghorn, pointing to a pair in the corner. Sam headed to different feet — orange Daffy Duck feet — in another corner. "No!" snapped Foghorn. "The other feet." On went Sam's head.

A public-relations officer who was present when I went "backstage" at Great

You actually become the rabbit."

Still, Benton probably will not stick it out. "I'd like to direct someday," he says, strolling past a souvenir booth where a teenager is painting a swastika on a painter's cap. Right now he's studying film at a local community college and doing the Bugs gigs in his spare time. Bugs, he says, could be his ticket to the world of comedy. "I think it's great training for moving up the ladder. Hey, this is show biz. One day I was doing a promotion in Manhattan and I ran into Bill Murray. The king! He comes up and says, 'Hey, Bugs!' And there I was, doing shtick with the king. That has to give you hope."

Absolutely. After theme-park employees, the next level on the fur-person food chain is that of contract performers in musical revues on stage or ice. This is where the worlds of high art and floppy ears collide. These are pros.

"We're not mascots. We're *trained performers in costume*," says John Cameron, a 27-year-old dancer from Long Beach, California, who has been defining and redefining Ernie in the touring company of *Sesame Street Live* for ten years. "Sometimes it's rough on the road," Cameron says from his hotel room in Ontario, just one stop on a 350-shows-a-year tour. "But, you know, it's rewarding. Sometimes we don't get the recognition we might deserve. But, hey, we get paid well. We have big crowds. We're at the top." The top — yet, sadly for Cameron, apparently not quite top enough. "I plan to move on one day," he says, "to other stage opportunities."

Ernie is, of course, teamed with Bert, played by 31-year-old Steve Gurrola, a trained dancer from Los Angeles who used to tour with a European ballet troupe. While Bert and Ernie are required to do some sophisticated dance steps in the show, Cameron and Gurrola consider the toughest part of the job to be doing justice to their characters. *Don't just play Bert*, Gurrola reminds himself. *Be Bert. Cultivate him. Eat and sleep Bert.* That's why they say they actually enjoy going to all the *Sesame Street Live* promotional events, sticking their giant heads out of taxi windows and dazzling pedestrians. That's why they don't miss a step even when mosquitoes



from me, you green fuckin' mascot," growled Tommy Lasorda at the Phillie Phanatic

Adventure hung on Tom Benton's every word.

Can't Bugs and company be interviewed privately? I asked.

"No," the PR woman responded. "That would be impossible."

Benton-Bugs smiled. "What we do," he said, "is some dancing and skits. But mostly we just circulate — shake hands, pose for pictures. This is where you can really let go and shine." Like other furry-costumed performers, Benton emphasizes the importance of the Method in preparing for a role: "You have to study Bugs to become Bugs. You just can't put on some feet and ears and say, 'Here I am.' But after a lot of practice, it all clicks.



Team Players: top, the Olivier of American Kabuki—the Famous Chicken (formerly the San Diego Chicken); bottom, the Larry Storch of American Kabuki—Willie Win One

buzz around inside their heads, as they tend to do.

"Yeah, I plan to move on in this business," Gurrola says. "I'd like to work behind the scenes here." But then he turns introspective. Gurrola knows that for Cameron and himself, this is more than a job; Bert and Ernie have become their alter egos. "A lot of people say to me, 'You're *so* Bert,'" Gurrola confesses. He's not sure whether he was always Bert — whether his Bertness is a function of nature or nurture — but he's pretty sure he's always had the little yellow guy in him somewhere. And likewise for his partner: "God! John, he's *so* Ernie. Like, I can't even get my luggage in the door, and he's very organized. It's fate."

About equal to Ernie and Bert in terms of American Kabuki status are the mascots of college sports teams. Of the 250 college mascots in America today, more than 70 are eagles. After eagles, the most common mascots are, in descending order, tigers, cougars, bulldogs, lions, warriors, panthers, Indians, wildcats and bears. These are mascots' mascots: most of them are paid nothing (though a few earn scholarships and personal-appearance fees of up to \$10,000), and they

have to squeeze their performing and daily workouts in between calculus and English composition. They do their job because they have what the aforementioned Cocky calls "that fire within." [See "Furry Like Me," page 53.] At the University of Wisconsin it's possible that no one at all would show up to see the football team get routed were it not for the antics of Bucky Badger, whose mere presence prompts stirring mass chants of "Fuck 'em, Bucky!" And when the Boston College Eagle came to New York to appear on the *Today* show last year, he requested that his room be booked in the name of Clark Kent. "I have millions of fans all across the country," he explained to Bryant Gumbel—and I simply can't risk being bothered by them, he did not have to add.



event, an entertainment icon who soon began building what he now calls his power base—getting hired by the Padres, having a swankier new costume tailored, visiting other stadiums, making \$2,500-a-pop personal appearances. Team owners everywhere would beg him to "do that peeing thing" near the umpires. In a few short years the Chicken had become an industry.

"It wouldn't be too much to say that the Chicken created the mascot boom, if we can call it that," says Giannoulas, referring to his character, as most serious performing artists do, in the third person. Giannoulas has his own office and a secretary who answers the phone with the words "Famous Chicken." He is said to make about \$400,000 a year and stands to make more now that he's an in-

In what is known as the Fudgie Incident, a Mets bat girl claims that the big whale

Of course, a collegiate eagle's worries are nothing compared with the pressures and demands placed on the professional-sports mascot. The Phoenix Suns' slam-dunking Gorilla says he avoids discussing his professional life while out of costume. "I either tell people I'm in public relations or that I work for the Phoenix Suns," he says. "If I tell them I'm the man behind the hair, I have to do a backflip." There are no examples yet of pro teams drafting mascots out of colleges, but that doesn't deter fledgling bulls and eagles one bit. Because the major-league-sports mascot is the top of the heap, American Kabuki-wise. When we talk about professional-sports mascots, we are talking about superstars, mascots who earn more in a year than most Americans will in a decade. They fill stadiums where teams can't. They have fan clubs and limos. They are household names: The Phillie Phanatic. The Phoenix Gorilla. And, of course, the godfather of all mascots, their pioneer, the San Diego Chicken (who, incidentally, recently seceded from the Padres and renamed himself the Famous Chicken, having apparently become too big for the team).

The Chicken was born in 1974—somehow one *knew* that American Kabuki flowered in the seventies—when a man from the San Diego radio station KGB asked a communications class at San Diego State University if anyone would be interested in part-time work wearing a chicken suit and giving away Easter eggs for a promotion at the zoo. A student named Ted Giannoulas raised his hand. Half a dozen other students also raised their hands, so Giannoulas's chances seemed slim. But then, in a scene reminiscent of the time Ruby Keeler went on for the star in *42nd Street*, or the time Greg Brady became Johnny Bravo, Giannoulas got the part: he was the only one who fit into the suit.

Things started badly, as the Chicken wandered around the San Diego Zoo to little fanfare, hanging his head and staring forlornly at the big basket of eggs he had to get rid of. After four days he considered quitting, but then something—he doesn't know what—told him to take his eggs to a Padres game. For some reason the Padres allowed the radio-station Chicken onto the field, and a star was born. The Chicken pretended to urinate on the umps. He slid into third base, and then, as if some unearthly force were moving his limbs, he backed up and did it all in slow motion. The fans went wild. The Chicken became the main



Furry Special Friends: Morton Downey Jr. schmoozes a felt-and-foam Betty Rubble at a celebrity tennis match; Zsa Zsa Gabor does some of her 120 hours of community service with Woody the Owl ("Give a hoot, don't pollute!").

dependent contractor. "Now I see all these upstarts copying me," Giannoulas says. "I won't say who, but there are some biggies, and they know who they are. Anyway, I know what I've done for people, and that's a nice feeling."

One of these "biggies" is certainly Dave Raymond, who has been the Phillie Phanatic for each of its 12 years on earth. Like Giannoulas, Raymond became an American Kabuki artist by accident. The Phillies had just received their first Phanatic costume, and they were about to announce open auditions to cast the fat green beast. Then someone in the Phillies organization asked

Raymond, a gofer with no costume experience at all, to try on the suit just for laughs. Like Cinderella's glass slipper, the Phanatic costume was a perfect fit. Even more remarkable, Raymond turned out to have that special mascot something. "It was sort of like a gift from Heaven," he says. "Here I am, just a regular guy working at a regular job, and the next day—boom! I'm the mascot. Wow. I mean, this isn't the sort of thing that happens to most people. I consider myself a very lucky person."

Though he's usually as cool as ice, Raymond had a few butterflies one night last August as he sat wearing shorts and a T-shirt in his Veterans Stadium dressing room before a game against the Dodgers. It seemed there was bad blood between the Phanatic and Tommy Lasorda, the foulmouthed Slim-Fast pitchman and Dodgers manager. At a game the previous year, the Phanatic had obtained Lasorda's extra uniform, which he'd put on a

dummy. After stuffing the dummy's belly with towels, he'd pummeled it in front of the appreciative hometown fans. Lasorda, apparently tired of the fat jokes, had come barreling out of the dugout and tackled the Phanatic, furiously punching him about the ribs and face.

"He's still not over it, and it really affects my performance," says Raymond, who does admit that he once "went bananas and coldcocked" a vodka-and-orange-juice-wielding Mets fan who attacked him in the stands. He ceremoniously lowers the Phanatic outfit hanging on a pulley above him and puts on the shiny red legs first. "I'll manage, though. In fact, it could be a great night. I'll heckle him a little." On goes the enormous body. Raymond grins. "It's still fun, you know. Every time out there

ondled her buttocks with his right fin

I get a little better. It's all improv." Next comes the famous head, its curled paper tongue poking out of the megaphone-shaped snout. "Yeah, I plan to do this for a while. It's what I am." Then the big feet go on. Goodbye, Dave Raymond. Hello, Phanatic.

From his first minute on the field, the Phanatic is on the offensive. He rides his little red scooter over to the Dodgers' dugout, where Lasorda is watching his players loosen up. "Get the fuck away from me, you green fuckin' mascot!", Lasorda growls. He refuses to make eye contact with the Phanatic, who is pumping his hips and wagging his hands toward the skipper. The Phanatic seems buoyed by

his suggestive disco moves during Madonna's "Hanky Panky."

Between innings the Phanatic, holding an electric fan up to his sweat-soaked, unclothed torso, acknowledges his debt to the Chicken. "He's a master," Raymond says, American Kabuki's Kevin Kline discussing its Olivier. Then Raymond talks about the high point of his mascot career. It was the Chicken's first-ever appearance at Veterans Stadium, an event so monumental that news accounts of the ballgame itself were buried under what one reporter called "an orgy" of Chicken-vs.-Phanatic stories. The Phanatic watched in amazement as the Chicken beelined it toward a sweet-tempered ball girl named Mary Sue Styles. The Chicken approached Mary Sue, then drew closer to her in a fashion that the Phanatic calls "a little sexy, if you know what I mean. It was pretty dirty, but it was terrific. It was the kind of move that has made mascots what they are now."

Having gone straight to the top of American Kabuki with no experience, the Chicken and the Phanatic are inspirations to apprentices everywhere. For most performers, though, the road is rough, the obstacles many. Such was the experience of the dozen finalists trying out last summer for Hugo the Hornet, mascot of the Charlotte Hornets, North Carolina's three-year-old NBA franchise. The Hornets were looking to replace the first Hugo, who had recently quit because, according to one knowledgeable source, "Hugo and the team differed on matters of life-style."

Hornets owner George Shinn was standing with Wayde Harrison and his partner, Bonnie Erickson, in the musty, humid basketball gym of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. "This," said Shinn, "is not mascot weather."

Meanwhile, in a makeshift dressing room near the bleachers, the first contestant prepared for battle. A Greenville native, Greg Leekly had been up all night worrying. Sure, he had done his time as a chicken for WANS Radio, but wandering through the crowd at a Beach Boys concert was so, as Leekly put it, "unemotional." It couldn't possibly prepare a guy to step into the shoes of Hugo. Leekly carefully pulled on Hugo's thorax and feet and stared for a moment at the big, blue Hugo face. He breathed deeply and put on the bug head. "Okay," he said, "let's do it."

BUT IS THERE A DISNEY WORLD IN NEW GUINEA?

Around the World With Silly Oversize Heads: The Roots of American Kabuki



*Kabuki performer,
Tokyo, Japan*



*Goroka mud man,
Papua New Guinea*



*Balong dancer,
Bali*



*Native on
the threshold of manhood,
Papua New Guinea*



*Youppi of the Montreal Expos,
Montreal, Canada*

the tension. It feeds him as he mimics Dodgers first baseman Eddie Murray's walk and, Keaton-esque, boots a grounder thrown by catcher Rick Dempsey. The crowd is rapt. It especially likes

Leekly then bounded down some stairs and rushed onto the court as a series of bad pop tunes of his own choosing blared over the sound system. He started off disastrously: he spoke, effectively shattering American Kabuki Rule No. 1. "Stay in character," a judge scolded. Then Leekly



NOTHING ATTRACTS LIKE THE IMP



CORIANDER SEEDS FROM MOROCCO



ANGELICA ROOT FROM SAXONY



JUNIPER BERRIES FROM ITALY



CASSIA BARK FROM INDOCHINA

began moving more fluidly and boldly. He grabbed a girl from the audience and danced her around. He clapped his hands at an imaginary audience, bounced in circles, wagged his little stinger and exited in a triumphant swell of applause. It was a solid performance.

"See," said Harrison, obviously pleased, "this is very artistic. Very conceptual. It's do-or-die."

Next up was Jerry H., aka Cocky of the University of South Carolina. Jerry H. had paid his dues, having spent whole summers wandering around Myrtle Beach as Cocky, doing those dances in 100-degree heat while little kids spilled chili dogs and Slush Puppies on his feathers. "I'm trained as an athlete, you know, a gymnast," he said. "But this lets me take my talents and push them to their limits. It is a career. A lot of mascots, they want to become big stars. Make movies. Not me. I want to do *this*." Jerry H. gave an inspired performance in Charlotte, and his chances seemed good.

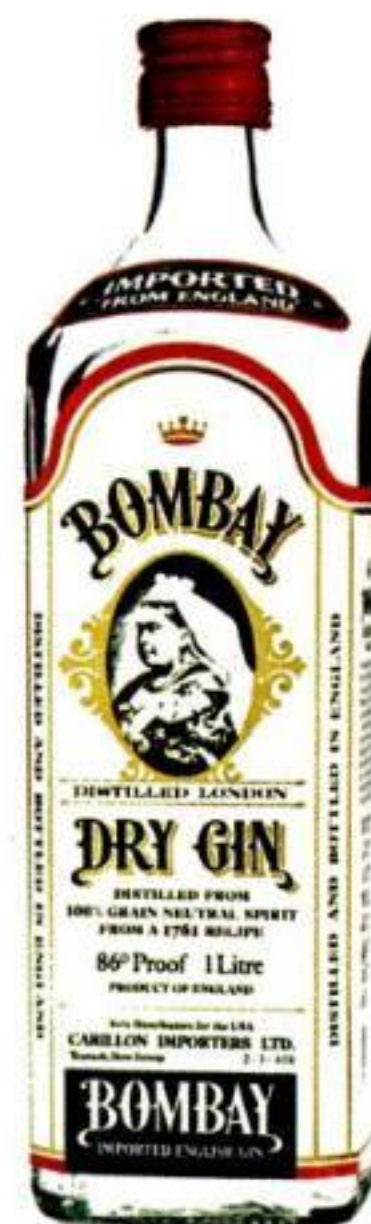
At this point things started getting a little ugly. It was the American Kabuki performer's most elemental nemesis: heat. As the day wore on, to put on Hugo's head was to smell the fetid bodies of half a dozen different would-be mascots. One contestant kept tripping over his Hula-Hoops. Another seemed dazed inside the costume, reeling like a top on its last spin. Another removed Hugo's head and vomited in the bathroom, taking care not to splatter the blue body. "Hugo's great," said one finalist after his audition, "but this sucks."

Unbeknownst to the contestants, the Hornets had flown in a ringer from the West Coast. While the majority of the aspiring Hugos were skinny teenagers, this mystery contestant was a rippling mascot of steel, a virtual assassin. He had impressive connections in the mascot world—he was, in fact, the roommate of the world's newest mascot superstar, the Phoenix Suns' Gorilla.

Finally he appeared, his muscular legs bulging out of Hugo's blue bottom as the "Theme from *Rocky*" boomed. "Dancing and clapping are good," he told me just before starting, "but dunking is what wins it." Whereupon he placed a small trampoline under the hoop and walked back past the half-court line. He eyed the rim. Then he took off, hit the tramp, soared into the air, raised a ball high with his big insect hand and...missed. There was silence in the gym. He looked over at the judges, and they looked at him. He went back and tried again. He missed. Then he missed a third time.

The problem was the gloves. "They're way too big for dunking," said Bonnie Erickson calmly. She had been there before. Off came the gloves, and the contestant, like a blind man suddenly blessed with sight, was dunking. Good dunks, ferocious dunks, Phoenix Gorilla-like dunks. There would be other contestants after this display, but the Hornets had made up their mind right then and there. You can always find smaller gloves. You can't always find a dunking mascot.

AND FOR THE NEW HUGO, FORTUNE AND FAME await—anonymous fame, of course, owing to American Kabuki Rule No. 3. But even anonymous celebrity is not without its price. Artists and celebrities of all kinds have to contend with more than their fair share of legal entanglements, troublemaking



ORTED TASTE OF BOMBAY GIN.



ALMONDS FROM INDOCHINA



LEMON PEEL FROM SPAIN



ORRIS (IRIS ROOT) FROM ITALY



LICORICE FROM INDOCHINA

Bombay® Gin, 43% alc/vol (86 proof), 100% grain neutral spirits. © 1988 Carillon Importers, Ltd., Teaneck, NJ.

fans, paternity suits and the like. And the American Kabuki performer is not immune to these problems. Perhaps the Phoenix Gorilla put it best: "It's hard to find a mascot you can be proud of."

Indeed, the field has been rocked lately by a number of scandals that have tarnished the efforts of conscientious American Kabuki performers everywhere. There have always been minor tremors—the perennial argument over how mascots like the Washington Redskin are racist icons, for instance. But these are comparatively existential issues.

Sometimes the problem is just that the fans are unfamiliar with standard American Kabuki technique. Last July, for example, a female spectator at a baseball game between the Batavia, New York, Clippers and the Oneonta Yankees complained that Batavia's blue-feathered Chipper the Clipper "shook his behind in my face in front of my two young children." Chipper was unavailable for comment.

But the most prominent item on the mascot blotter is what has come to be known in American Kabuki circles as the Fudgie Incident. Last summer the Carvel Ice Cream Company dispatched its furry Fudgie the Whale to Shea Stadium to work the crowd on Carvel Cap Day. Tragedy struck. One of the Mets' bat girls claims the fake aquatic mammal fondled her buttocks with his right fin. Carvel spokeswoman Gia Bocciarelli denies that Fudgie attempted any funny stuff, insisting instead that, be-

cause this was the whale's first gig, he used faulty "flipper technique."

Would it be possible to speak to Fudgie himself?, I asked.

"No," Bocciarelli said, launching into the mascot's most treasured credo. "Fudgie doesn't speak."

But surely the person who plays the mascot can speak for himself, I pressed.

"No. We handle all mascot situations."

"All mascot situations"—were there other Fudgie-related incidents?

"No, but—well, I could fax you a statement from Fudgie," Bocciarelli offered. Minutes later, I had Fudgie's statement, which read in part, "If in all the excitement of being surrounded by so many ice cream and Met fans my flippers did accidentally brush up against and offend someone I am very sorry...but I did have a whale of a good time!!"

Obviously, it's no picnic at the top. For the hugely successful American Kabuki artist, ordinary, everyday life is a thing of the past. Like Garbo, like Elvis, the superstar becomes an island—isolated from his or her following. Take the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, whose recent sold-out "rock concerts" at Radio City Music Hall were the American Kabuki equivalent of the Beatles at Shea Stadium. When the Turtles did a preconcert promotional appearance, playing air guitar on top of the Radio City marquee, hundreds of accountants, lawyers and bookies thronged Sixth Avenue, pumping their fists in the air. "We might be able to squeeze in ten phone minutes in two weeks," the Turtles' tour spokeswoman, Diane Blackman, told me, "but don't hold your breath." She then warned me against asking any questions about the actors behind the masks: "Remember, they only talk Turtle." A week later, Blackman called back to say that what with all the publicity demands and the media glare, it was very unlikely that any Turtles could make time to talk. "But you could always try later," she suggested.

I did, a few times, but the Turtles did not return phone calls. ▀

by Bruce Handy

the WOOF of IT

SPLENDOR AND SQUALOR, PLUM-
PUDDING RICHES AND BLEAK
HOUSE HORRORS—VICTORIAN
LONDON LIVES AGAIN IN OUR VERY OWN



*"That's the
state to live
and die in!"
said Mr.
Boffin, in
an unctuous
manner.
"R-r-rich!"*

—OUR MUTUAL
FRIEND

• Private ball,
Sheraton Centre

Hungry eyes wandered over the profusion.... Life and death went hand in hand; wealth and poverty stood side by side; repletion and starvation laid them down together. —NICHOLAS NICKLEBY

Sidewalk, midtown Manhattan ▶



ST TIMES

DICKENSIAN NEW YORK!

York City, which offered much to which a celebrated English novelist could condescend. Among other things, he was amused to find packs of free-ranging pigs used for garbage removal ("Ugly brutes they are") and was repulsed by the particulars of certain nineteenth-century American habits: "I have twice seen gentlemen, at evening parties in New York, turn aside when they were not engaged in conversation, and spit upon the drawing-room carpet," he wrote to a friend back home. "And in every bar-room and hotel passage the stone floor looks as if it were paved with open oysters...."

By and large, though, Dickens was impressed by "the beautiful metropolis of America," as he referred to our city in his *American Notes for General Circulation*. Manhattan's streets, he wrote, were clean, sunny, quiet—even "cheerful." Its citizens he found to be good-looking, well dressed, generous and friendly. Cabs he found to be plentiful. Perhaps most noteworthy of

all—especially for a passionate advocate of the poor and dispossessed such as Dickens—he realized one day that "we have seen no beggars on the streets by night or day."

No beggars? In *New York City*? Our town has clearly evolved during the intervening 148 years between Dickens's visit and this, the year in which our transit cops were directed to arrest subway panhandlers in a pathetic attempt to restore a veneer of civic well-being. In fact, late-twentieth-century New York has become rather like the mid-nineteenth-century London Dickens left,

the London so richly and disturbingly chronicled in his novels and other writings. We suspect that, leaving aside his inevitable shock at such twentieth-century innovations as automobiles, television and overweight people in skintight bicycle shorts, Dickens would feel quite at home in contemporary New York, a city that has given new zip to musty adjectives like *wretched* and *ragged*, a city that is home to (as Dickens himself puts it in *Oliver Twist*) "every repulsive lineament of poverty, every loathsome indication of filth, rot, and garbage."

And that's not all:

Men and women sleeping in the open. Lung-burning air. Fetid streets. Hellish prisons. Nightmarish schools. Greed. Indifference. Profligate displays of wealth amid the squalor. A self-conscious fondness in certain precincts for rich fabrics, antique sporting gear and old framed prints of guardsmen with big whiskers.... These are only the more obvious parallels between Dickensian London and our own, Dickensian New York. Don't forget that tuberculosis is suddenly on the rise, as are circulation figures for *Victoria* magazine.

It is at the holiday season especially that a snug Dickensian mantle descends upon our city—Christmas being a holiday that exists most fully in one's received memories, and thus a holiday whose celebrations are noteworthy mostly for one's dashed expectations. The point here is that we owe a goodly portion of those received memories to *A Christmas Carol*, the single work by Dickens with which just about every American has at least a glancing familiarity, if only through the mediation of Alastair Sim, Mr. Magoo or Bill Murray. And so it is that we tra-

verse New York this month with visions of Scrooge and Tiny Tim and the fattest goose in the poulterer's window (in the book it's a turkey) and the hush of a Christmas Eve snowfall broken only by the sweet strains of wee carolers. Daylight turning flinty, we allow ourselves to imagine that New York's authentically nineteenth-century streets have become a little less mean, our city a little more cozy. *Cut the pudding, raise high the nog, God bless us every one* (never mind that Christmas Day might really be spent breakfasting alone at the Olympic Coffee Shop

and whiling away the afternoon at a matinee of *The Rescuers Down Under*—a sentimental effort to be in the near vicinity of children). For this double-edged relief we should thank Charles Dickens, along with Clement Moore, Thomas Nast, Macy's, Sears and the WPIX Yule log.

But *A Christmas Carol* is only a single novella in a life's work comprising 14 very hefty novels; West 10th Street between Fifth and Sixth on a snowy December night at the stroke of twelve is only a single block in a sprawling city. *Bleak House* and *Hard Times*

white man, 65.4 years. In 1840 the rate of death for English babies was 153 per 1,000 live births; in New York the most recent figure is 13.4 per 1,000 live births. Thus, thanks to modern medicine, we may proudly say that we are proportionally more alive than our Victorian forebears. Unfortunately, we are also proportionally more homeless (roughly four times), proportionally more criminal (roughly eight times) and proportionally more illegitimate (roughly 20 times for those of us born in 1988, which is worth noting, given that over half the children in America growing up with single mothers are officially poor as well).

So in certain ways we have grown worse than a society that quieted noisy babies with opium drops, tossed 6-year-olds in jail and boasted an age of sexual consent of 12. But in certain ways, too, we have improved—and not just actuarially. No longer do we wall lunatics away in gloomy asylums. Instead, we invite them into our streets, where they may enjoy the curative effects of freedom and steam-grate bedding. No longer do we permit children to toil for endless hours in dark and airless factories or coal mines. Instead, they ply their trades on sunny avenues, providing their communities with highly sought-after services and products; our more equitable economy ensures that these youths are adequately recompensed—and more than adequately armed. No longer are debtors tossed into prison. Instead, they are placed in prominent positions at corporations, banks, even the uppermost reaches of our



The school... was a miserable loft in an unsavoury yard. Its atmosphere was oppressive and disagreeable; it was crowded, noisy, and confusing; half the pupils dropped asleep, or fell into a state of waking stupefaction.... Old in the vices of the commonest and worst life, {they} were expected to profess themselves enthralled by the good child's book, the Adventures of Little Margery....

—OUR MUTUAL FRIEND

▲ Classroom, West Side High School, Manhattan

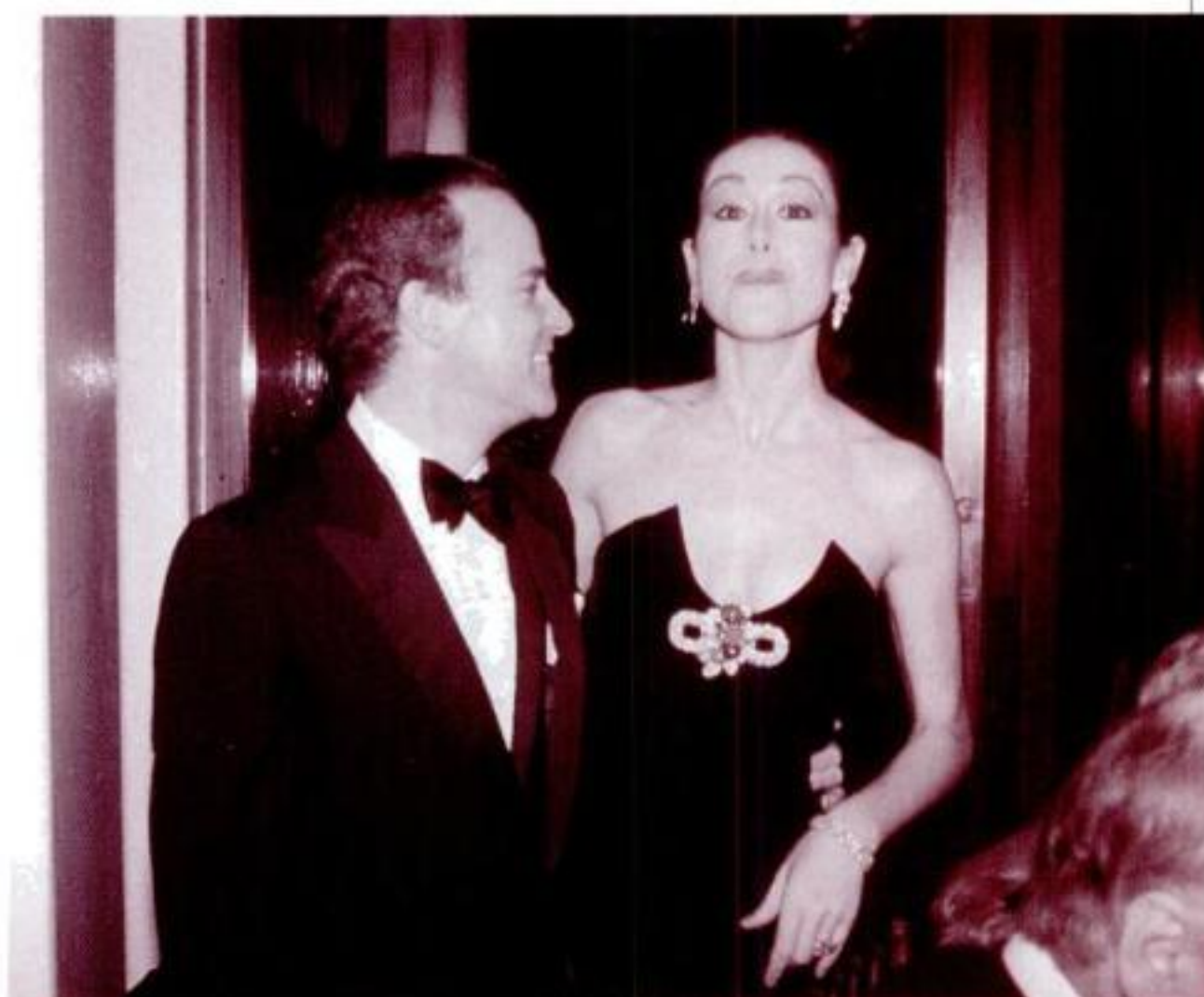
await, as do Red Hook and the South Bronx.

Yes, you may be saying to yourself, *this is all very facile. But is it statistically valid?* Well, let's see: the life expectancy for an Englishman born in the 1850s was 40.46 years; the life expectancy of a future white man born in New York in 1980 is 69.1 years, that of a future non-

It was not a bosom to repose upon, but it was a capital bosom to hang jewels upon. Mr. Merdle wanted something to hang jewels upon, and he bought it for {that} purpose.... Like all his other speculations, it was sound and successful. The jewels showed to the richest advantage. The bosom moving in Society with the jewels displayed upon it, attracted general admiration. Society approving, Mr. Merdle was satisfied.

—LITTLE DORRIT

Henry Kravis and Carolyne Roehm, Metropolitan Opera House »



government.

As the preceding paragraph proves, Dickensian social conditions aren't the only aspect of Victorian life still with us: overwrought Victorian sarcasm also has its place. Indeed, one reads Dickens today and is startled by the still-crisp snap of his satire. There are, for instance, Mr. Bounderby's knowing assertions in *Hard Times* that the "unreasonable" poor invariably expect to be "fed on turtle soup and venison, with a gold spoon." One need only substitute *fur coats* and *Cadillacs* for a more contemporary effect. It takes even less imagination to detect the canny relevance of this passage from *Oliver Twist*: "The members of this [public welfare] board were very sage, deep, philosophical men, and when they came to turn their attention to the workhouse, they found out at

once, what ordinary folks would never have discovered—the poor people liked it! It was a regular place of public entertainment for the poorer classes; a tavern where there was nothing to pay; a public breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper all the year round...." *Torn from the pages of a Heritage Foundation white paper!*

Of course, it's easy sport bashing bureaucrats and right-wingers, no matter what the century. That said, *any* New Yorker who has had cause to use a sidewalk during the last ten years will be familiar with the thought processes Dickens describes in this passage from *Our Mutual Friend*, which concerns an elderly woman, down on her luck, who ekes out a mean living selling ribbons on the street: "Ladies in carriages would frequently make purchases from her tri-

fling stock, and were usually pleased with her bright eyes and hopeful speech. In these and her clean dress originated a fable that she was well to do in the world: one might say, for her station, rich. As making a comfortable provision for its subject which costs nobody anything, this class of fable has long been popular." And so remains.

Our cityscape today is chockablock with eccentric, recognizably Dickensian types. The greenmailer and socialite Saul Steinberg's

sybaritic piggishness recalls the young Wackford Squeers Jr. of *Nicholas Nickleby* ("What do you think of him, sir, for a specimen of Dotheboys Hall feeding?... Here's flesh!"). On a more gothic note, Yoko Ono's frozen devotion recalls Miss Havisham's in *Great Expectations*, and any number of New York City public school principals recall the grotesque Squeers Sr., *Nickleby's* craven schoolmaster, or the grim Messrs. Gradgrind and M'Choakumchild of *Hard Times*.

But before this essay de-



There were little faces which should have been handsome, darkened with the scowl of sullen dogged suffering; there was childhood with the light of its eye quenched, its beauty gone... there were vicious-faced boys brooding, with leaden eyes, like malefactors in a jail; and there were young creatures on whom the sins of their frail parents had descended.... What an incipient Hell was breeding there!—NICHOLAS NICKLEBY

« Housing project, Red Hook

"At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge," said the gentleman... "a few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?"

"Nothing!" Scrooge replied... "I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support {the prisons and the workhouses}: they cost enough: and those who are badly off must go there."

—A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Men's shelter, Lower East Side >

volves into a parlor game, let's pause and consider David Dinkins. While the concept of an African-American mayor would seem to be beyond the ken of the Victorian imagination, our mayor seems to have sprung fully drawn from the pages of Dickens, perhaps even from the too-numerous pages of that Penguin edition of *Dombey and Son*—or is it *Barnaby Rudge*?—that sits on your bookshelf, unread and reproachful, a lingering relic of thwarted good intentions. Mayor Dinkins, that is. In one stroke he combines the uphill optimism of Mr. Micawber, the cringing clerkishness of Bob Cratchit, the

aura of doom surrounding Little Nell; even his name exhibits Dickens's fondness for descriptive nomenclature.

The mayor's cautious, discursive habits of speech are ripely Dickensian, a triumph of the kind of quirky dialogue with which the author caricatures the more comic of his creations. Consider this performance from a recent Dinkins press conference, a discussion of the mayor's limp and fretful reactions to mayhem inflicted on and by his constituents: "I say that if two nations are in dispute and one diplomat says to the representative of another government, 'Her Majesty's government is ex-



ceedingly distressed,' everybody knows that means we're mad as hell. Now, however, I'm prepared to say I'm mad as hell, not simply, 'We're exceedingly distressed.'" An orotund semantic disquisition while the city burns, a bit of wry, albeit heavy-handed, satire, a passing

reference to the queen—now, *that's* Dickensian! (So too, by the way, is the gnarled syntax of George Bush, though it calls to mind not the author's successes but his occasional excesses—like forcing readers to spend 800 pages with characters whose every speech impediment is lovingly and



The fun of it is that nobody knows who these Veneerings are, and that they know nobody, and that they have a house out of the Tales of the Genii, and give dinners out of the Arabian Nights.... You really ought to see their gold and silver camels.

—OUR MUTUAL FRIEND

♦ Donald and Ivana Trump, Mar-a-Lago

phonetically limned.)

The most Dickensian of Dinkinsian moments to date came this fall when it was revealed that the mayor had commissioned an \$11,500 headboard for his bedroom—this during a year when New York City children were being inadvertently shot in their sleep. Just the sort of bitter irony Dickens would have appreciated—indeed, would probably have forced, by juxtaposing a scene of the mayor enjoying luxuriant rest with a scene of poor, dear, orphaned Little Will dying in his orphaned sister's arms, uncomplaining, regretting only that he never returned the "boo'ful rich lady's" handkerchief, or some other trivial, tear-jerking transgression.

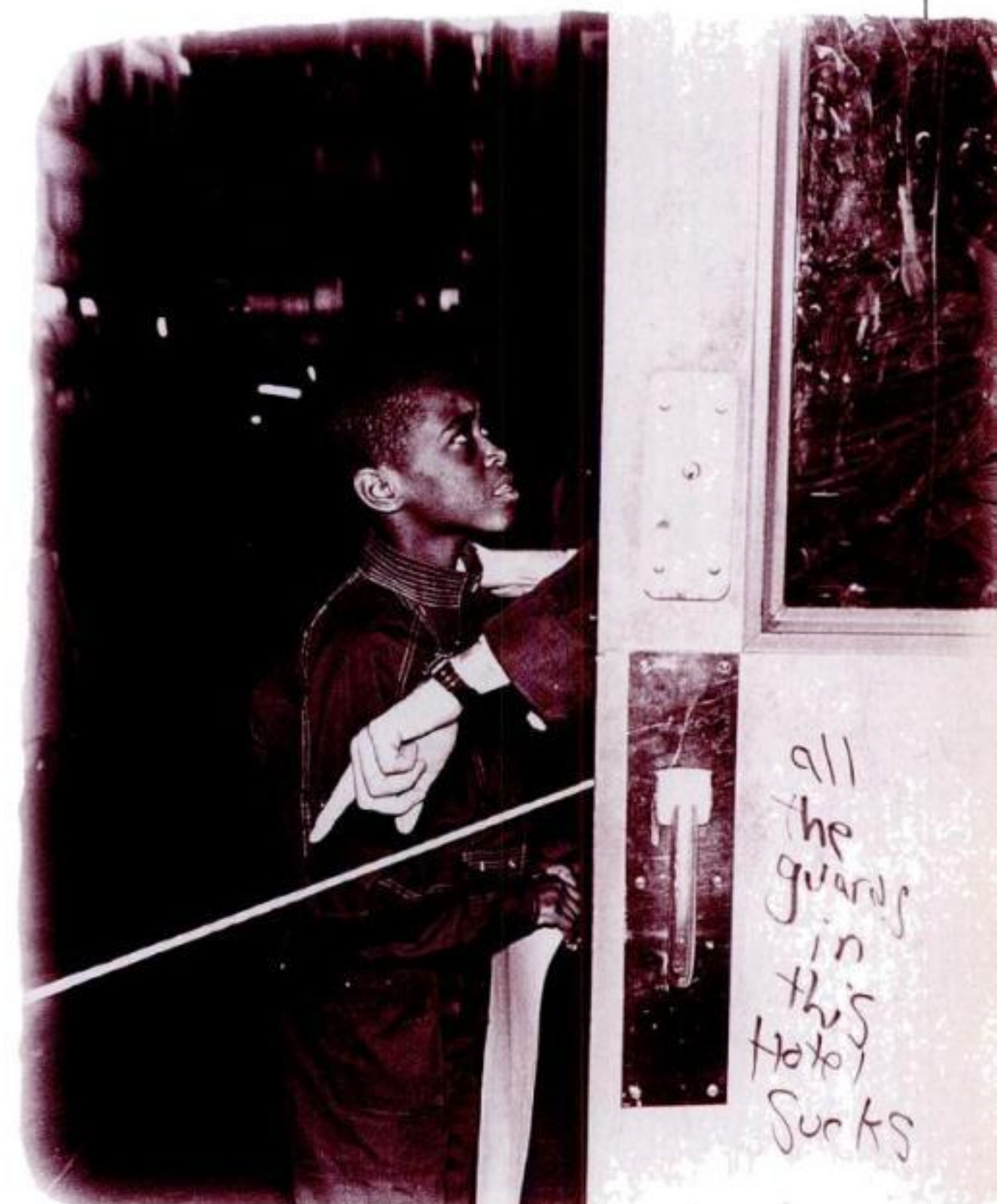
This is all, of course, a bit unfair to Dinkins, a well-meaning man who shouldn't be expected to devote *all* his time to hand-wringing over dead minors. But then, Dickens isn't always the fairest of writers—and is never one to blunt the effects of his rhetorical powers. After all, how many authors are still revolting readers—*paved with open oysters*, indeed—a century and a half after the fact?

At any rate, amid contemporary ugliness a strange and even wonderful thing happened in New York last year: public life began to take on not just the particulars but also the larger narrative structures of Dickensian fiction—the heart-stopping coincidences, the ghastly swings of fortune, the eventual balancing of moral scales. Dating back to *Johnson v. Johnson* and the Baby M case, New Yorkers had already been diverted by increasingly entertaining battles over lineage

and inheritance. More satisfying still, as the decade turned, long-running scamps such as Donald Trump, Al Sharpton, John Gotti, George Steinbrenner, Leona Helmsley and Communism were brought to justice—or at least comeuppance. We saw Ed Koch voted out of office. We saw greedy financiers toppled. And what with the recession, and the concession on taxes, and the burgeoning S&L scandal (a political ally named Mr. Fail and his own son caught in its web: *very* Dickensian), even the president of the United States seemed on the verge of receiving due payback for the grubbiness of his rise to power.

But then...after nearly a year without Ed Koch, it turned out that life in New York had got worse—impossible but true—for everyone concerned. Except for Gotti, that is, who got off, and Sharpton, who got off, and even Trump, who has had the consolation of seeing his shabby second book rise briefly to the top of the best-seller list. Most disheartening of all, Iraq invaded Kuwait, and at this writing, George Bush is once again as inconceivably popular as he has ever been—a bitter, bitter, amoral ending that Dickens's readers would never have sat still for and Dickens would never have written.

Thus we knock into the limits of this sort of metaphoric gamesmanship: life goes on, whereas novels—even *Little Dorrit*—don't. For every real-life villain nailed, another escapes punishment altogether, or has his or her conviction overturned on appeal, or just blusters on in disgrace until the public gets



Now, she would light upon the shameful spectacle of some desolate creature(s)...lingering and lingering on a doorstep, while the appointed evader of the public trust did his dirty office of trying to weary them out and so get rid of them.

—OUR MUTUAL FRIEND

Welfare hotel, Manhattan

bored with peevish essayists bothering to remind it that the villain's sundry misdeemeanors were once exposed to light and considered for a moment to have been beyond the pale. As for Dickensian Providence, no members of the underclass whom we know of ever had their fortunes reversed by the queer stipulations of some dotty great-aunt's will (although our revenue-generating state-run lottery preys

upon a wish for precisely that unlikelihood).

No, moral justice is the one fixture of the Dickensian universe that is not entirely alive and well in late-twentieth-century New York. The fact that so many others *are* (unapologetic wealth, dire poverty, crime, urchins, over-stuffed grandeur, filth, greed, complacency, et al.) only serves to prove the point quite nicely. And on that note:

Season's greetings. D

Vulgarians at the Gate

How Two Smart
Guys from Texas
Went to Two
Stuffy Guys from
Wall Street
and Borrowed a
Lot of Money



And Which Guys
You'd Rather
Play Golf With



Before Jim Teal and Gary Shuster got into the licensed-comic-strip-character T-shirt business, they had mostly worked in fast food. Jim began his career as a dollar-an-hour chicken breeder at a Kentucky Fried Chicken store in his hometown of Columbus, Ohio, and, a few years out of high school, became one of the first employees of Wendy's. Wendy's prospered, and so

did Jim. Before he was 30, he had stock options worth more than \$1 million.

He quit the corporation to move to Austin, Texas, and run his own Wendy's franchises. They never made money, and Jim bailed out. He proceeded to make losing investments in a music festival and a kerosene-heater-distribution scheme. He opened a hot-tub parlor that did great until people got worried about herpes. He opened a male-stripper bar and sold out for an \$80,000 profit.

Then Jim asked Gary, a childhood friend and fellow Wendy's alumnus, to join him in Austin and help sell a line of computerized telephones. Jim paid \$60,000 for exclusive rights to sell them in central Texas. Jim and Gary quit the business when they learned that the manufacturer had sold exclusive central-Texas rights to two other people. Also, the phones had a tendency to explode.

Jim and Gary teamed up next with an artist who drew armadillo cartoons. They published a book of armadillo cartoons and put armadillo cartoons on T-shirts. Then Jim decided to expand. He got the T-shirt rights to a new, obscure comic strip he admired. It was called *Bloom County*.

Bloom County, of course, became a phenomenon, and Jim and Gary's company, Lin-Tex Marketing, sold hundreds of thousands of T-shirts bearing the images of Bill the Cat and Opus, the lovable penguin. They bought the rights to other comic strips as well, and by 1987, Lin-Tex was selling nearly \$4 million of T-shirts annually.

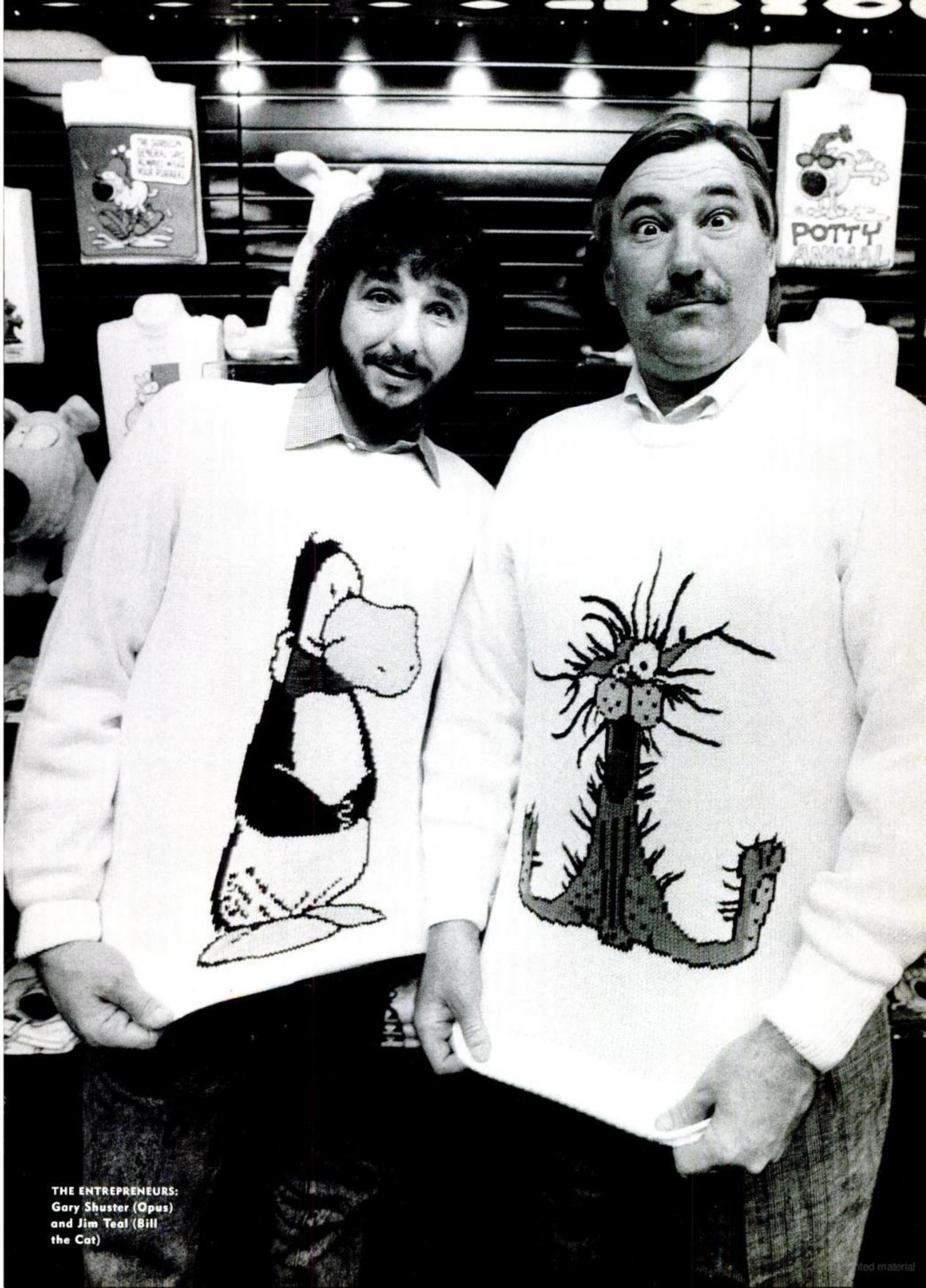
But the company was chronically short of cash, partly because of cash-flow problems inherent in the business and partly because Jim and Gary liked to work in fancy offices and to throw parties and always traveled first-class. After Texas's mid-1980s recession

by *Ed Zuckerman*

Excerpted from Small Fortunes, to be published in January by Viking

THE INVESTOR: Socialite and Wall Street blue blood Thomas Kempner

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THE ENTREPRENEURS:
Gary Shuster (Opus)
and Jim Teal (Bill
the Cat)

and the savings-and-loan crisis devastated Austin's banks, no one would lend Lin-Tex any more money. The company had huge orders for shirts, but suppliers were demanding they be paid for long-overdue bills. The situation was desperate.

Jim and Gary decided it was time to turn to Wall Street.

The meeting was so important that Jim and Gary didn't even drink on the plane, even though they had flown first-class, as usual, and the booze was free. It was only 9:00 p.m. when they arrived at their hotel, the New York Helmsley, but instead of going out on the town they went to bed. The meeting was set for 10:00 a.m., and they wanted to be at their best. This was in July 1987.

The next morning, they arrived at 40 Wall Street a few minutes early. They were wearing suits and silk ties and matching pairs of \$450 alligator-and-ostrich loafers. Jim wore a \$1,500 bracelet on which the word COMICS was spelled out in diamonds and gold. Gary, who had lost his matching bracelet a few weeks before, was carrying a combination videocassette recorder-television in a bag over his shoulder. He pressed a button in the elevator, the door slid shut, and he and Jim rode up to see if Loeb Partners, the blue-blooded investment firm with one of the most lustrous pedigrees on Wall Street, wanted to buy a minority interest in Lin-Tex Marketing.

Jim and Gary had been looking for cash nonstop since their two main suppliers had cut them off a month before. To buy time from one of their lenders, Lamar Savings, they had written the bankers a \$10,000 check, drawn on their Lamar account, to cover current interest; it bounced. Jim and Gary had \$300,000 in T-shirt orders sitting on the table unshipped, because Lin-Tex didn't have the money to buy the product. Jim called his brother Dave in Columbus and described his plight, and Dave suggested he call Jim Kirst in Florida. Kirst was an early Wendy's franchisee who had made millions of dollars in the fast-food business. He had frequently obtained financing for his ventures from Loeb Partners, with happy results for all. Jim telephoned Kirst, who remembered him and Gary from their Wendy's days. He suggested they call Loeb Partners, and he called the firm first to put in a good word for the boys.

Jim phoned a principal at Loeb Partners named Peter Dixon, who said he was pleased to hear from Jim and asked for a copy of Lin-Tex's business plan. The plan wasn't ready, Jim said. He sent Dixon a brief financial statement, an Opus-the-penguin T-shirt with SOLD MY SOUL TO ROCK 'N' ROLL printed on it, a Lin-Tex polo shirt with *Bloom County's* Bill the Cat embroidered on the left breast, and a Bill the Cat golf cap.

Gary threw himself into writing the business plan and came up with a 65-page document crammed with charts and graphs and convoluted but enthusiastic prose. "Our retail reorders of the same designs," it stated, "has proven

that the shelf life of the majority of our products has an infinite selling season."

The plan included a chart showing an increase in sales outlets from 159 to 1,755 over the 16 months since Lin-Tex had switched from a mail-order to a wholesale operation. "The sales growth of the company," the plan declared, "from \$225,000 [in its first year] to \$3,700,000 [in the fiscal year just ended], was not accomplished with a trendy product or magical powers; it was the result of a gathering of critical knowledge of the market, the precise execution of a R&D plan, and some unbelievable luck."

The plan did disclose that Lin-Tex had been running in the red for several months, a result, it said, of funding stepped-up marketing efforts out of cash flow. Two color-coded sales-history charts, showing steady growth month after month and year after year, went no later than May, when sales had topped \$400,000; it was left to one small black-and-white graph to disclose that shipments in June were \$100,000 (the plan did not explain why).

The package concluded with some optimistic predictions of future growth and a balance sheet that ascribed a value of \$2.5 million to Lin-Tex's T-shirt rights to *Bloom County*, *Mother Goose & Grimm* and ten other comic strips. The balance sheet did not include a disclaimer that Lin-Tex's accountant always insisted on adding when Jim and Gary valued their rights this high; standard accounting practice was to value such rights at the price paid for them (in this case, a small fraction of \$2.5 million). Jim and Gary thought this rule was unjust, and the page with the accountant's disclaimer usually disappeared from their financial statements. "It's a collating problem," Gary once explained.

As soon as the plan was finished, Jim rushed a copy to Peter Dixon, whose first reaction was that it was "rough." He nevertheless invited the Lin-Tex partners to New York for the meeting, which Jim and Gary now approached with a combination of ostentatious casualness ("We don't need this deal") and high anxiety.

The elevator stopped on the 35th floor, and Jim and Gary got out. They walked down the corridor to the door marked LOEB PARTNERS and stepped inside. From what they saw, it appeared a mistake had been made, that Loeb Partners ought to be seeking money from Lin-Tex Marketing, not the other way around. The reception area was a shabby little room with stained carpeting and two old chairs. Beyond it the firm's employees were conducting their business in ancient wooden cubicles. Compared with the Lin-Tex offices, the place looked like a bus station.

Of course, Loeb Partners was so established and rich it didn't need a nice office. It was a successor to the brokerage firm of Loeb Rhoades & Company (later Loeb Rhoades, Hornblower & Company), which had been purchased by Shearson in 1979; Shearson Loeb Rhoades had in turn been purchased by American Express in 1981. Several of the Loeb Rhoades principals had taken their substantial profits and regrouped as Loeb Partners, the main activity of which was investing the surplus cash of the principals and their relatives and friends.

One of their assets had been the building in which their office was located (a building that, upon its completion



THE TEXAN: So what if Gary is from Ohio? Someday he may have the ranch to go with the hat and the hood ornament.

in 1930, had briefly been the tallest in the world). In 1981 the firm sold it to a company that turned out to be a front for Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, with the proviso that Loeb Partners could rent its office at a bargain rate. Peter Dixon, who worked in a cubicle not much larger than Jim's desk, considered it a "rather modest office of the old style," and he was as comfortable there as he needed to be.

Dixon, in his fifties, was thin and precise, with heavy-black-framed glasses and an accent he had acquired at a private school in England. His father had been a partner in Rhoades & Company, which had merged with Loeb & Company in 1938 to form Loeb Rhoades. He greeted Jim and Gary and ushered them into the office of Thomas Kempner.

The 60-year-old Kempner, chairman of Loeb Partners, is the grandson of Carl Loeb, who founded Loeb & Company in 1931. Kempner's wife, Nan, is a leading New York socialite, endlessly chronicled in the society columns for sipping champagne with Baryshnikov at a benefit for the ballet or flying to Paris with Ivana Trump to see the spring line by Christian Lacroix. Two months before his appointment with Jim and Gary, Kempner's New York apartment had been the subject of a fawning article in *Architectural Digest*, complete with photos of the Aubusson rugs, Ming porcelain and Chippendale mirrors that fill "the two-story apartment the size of a country house."

As soon as Gary and Jim were seated in Kempner's office, Gary broke the ice by declaring, "We're just a couple of poor kids who never did anything but fry hamburgers and make T-shirts."

It was his standard introductory rap, and Jim joined in the chorus with tales of Kentucky Fried Chicken, including how he'd had to stand half in the bathroom at one store to bread the birds. Gary brought their story up to the Lin-Tex years: how in the early days they'd sold armadillo T-shirts from the trunk of their car at venues like the Marble Falls, Texas, Howdy-Roo. To bring the saga up to date, he plugged in the TV-VCR he'd carried up and inserted a tape produced at the Lin-Tex office. Gary's voice was on the soundtrack.

It began, "Down in Texas, we say, 'Howdy!'"

The tape showed smiling Lin-Tex employees answering phones, typing on computers and stacking T-shirts on warehouse shelves. There were still shots of Gary in his Wendy's uniform and Jim with Colonel Sanders.

Kempner and Dixon sat and listened to the tales of chicken breeding and everything else. In the course of looking for investments, they and their venture-capital associates investigated up to 100 companies a year, and they had seen people like Jim and Gary before. They were glad to see them again. "If you've made any investments in the food field," Dixon explained later, "Jim and Gary are people that one is very comfortable with. The food field is not an area that attracts

postgraduate students. The retail business does not attract many intellectuals. . . . We have gone with overeducated types who are involved in high technology and haven't the slightest idea how to make any money. We often have to bring in practical business managers. At the other end of the spectrum are people who know how to make money, who have been making money since age 17, the hard way, working 10 to 15 hours a day, who worked their way up the way Jim and Gary did. I'm more comfortable with those people. They've demonstrated they have the drive and the guts to make money."

Also working in Jim and Gary's favor were a strong endorsement from Kirst and the fact that the kind of money they were seeking was a small sum to Loeb Partners.

But the meeting did run into a few minor hitches.

Neither Dixon nor Kempner was familiar with *Bloom County*, although Dixon was a big fan of *Andy Capp*, and Kempner said, to Dixon's amazement, that he read *Spiderman* every day. Gary and Jim assured them of *Bloom County*'s popularity.

Dixon produced the SOLD MY SOUL TO ROCK 'N' ROLL T-shirt Jim had sent him. "We put it through our test laboratory," he said, "and the test laboratory reported some problems with deterioration of color." He held up the shirt, and it looked awful; the design was badly faded. "My wife washed it five times," Dixon explained.

Gary looked at it. "She bleached it."

Dixon acknowledged she had.

"You can't bleach these shirts," Gary said.

"If you don't bleach them," Kempner asked, "do they get clean?"

"I don't do my own laundry," Gary said, "but when I wear my shirts, they're clean."

Jim and Gary
arrived at
40 Wall Street
wearing matching
pairs of \$450
alligator-and-
ostrich loafers



Finally, Kempner indicated that the concept of wearing T-shirts as outerwear—the very root of Lin-Tex's business—was a little alien to him. He had served in the Navy, he said, where T-shirts were worn as *underwear*, and he had worn T-shirts as underwear ever since. Of course, he had noticed some people wearing T-shirts as outerwear, and he'd seen that the T-shirt Jim sent Dixon was large enough to be worn as outerwear...

"Tell them what happened at your club," Dixon cued him.

One of his nieces, Kempner said, a middle-aged woman, had appeared at the country club the previous Sunday wearing a T-shirt with a humorous dinosaur design. (This "was not a deal-making occurrence," Dixon said later, "but it was a happy coincidence, another added influence. An elite gentlewoman comes in wearing something her daughter had given her for her birthday in one of the elite clubs in America. It reflected the acceptability level T-shirts have now achieved.")

That hurdle passed, the meeting turned to the question of money. On the phone a few days earlier, Gary had told Dixon that Lin-Tex was looking for \$500,000 for 20 percent of the company. "You wanted \$500,000 for 25 percent," Dixon now began. Gary corrected him: "I said for 20 percent."

Kempner indicated that the concept of wearing T-shirts as outerwear was a little alien to him



and he and Jim marched out of the office.

Gary didn't want to wear the same suit to meet Loeb Partners two days in a row, so he and Jim went shopping. At Paul Stuart, Jim was amazed by the prices (\$800 for a sport jacket) and amused by the company logo that appeared on the house-brand polo shirts. "It's a man sitting on a stick!"

He and Gary walked down the block to Brooks Brothers, where Jim inspected the logo with interest. Kempner had mentioned this logo during their meeting

Jim jumped in with a gag. "No," he said, punching Gary in the arm. "You're giving away too much. Five percent."

Kempner and Dixon laughed, and moved on.

Dixon asked what Lin-Tex would do with \$500,000.

Pay off \$150,000 in debts, Gary said. Put the rest in certificates of deposit. Borrow against the CDs.

And that concluded the meeting. Dixon and Kempner said they would talk things over and be ready to meet again the following day around lunchtime.

Gary said they'd be there. He grabbed the ruined bleached shirt and stuck it in his bag,



THE CLOSING: Peter Dixon, far left, meeting with Jim and Gary (who are not wearing shorts) in Lin-Tex's swanky conference room

when talk had turned to the Lin-Tex polo shirt with its embroidered Bill the Cat. "All we see down here is the Golden Fleece," Kempner had said, "and we're tired of it." Neither Jim nor Gary was aware that the Golden Fleece was a mythological object sought by Jason and the Argonauts, or that it had been expropriated by Brooks Brothers for its logo, so they had let the comment pass.

But now here, on a Brooks Brothers polo shirt, was the Golden Fleece (in the Brooks Brothers representation, a sheep hanging from a branch in a sling). "It's a sheep being hung!" Jim exclaimed. "It's fucking horrible! I wouldn't wear it in a million years."

Gary, browsing among the pants, announced that he was ready to leave.

"What's the matter?" asked Jim. "Couldn't find no pants with a pig being hung?"

At Saks, Gary bought a gray plaid suit on sale for \$500.

Next stop was Yankee Stadium, for a summer evening's relaxation with a baseball game and large cups of beer. Jim was distracted temporarily by a young man in front of him who was trying to attract the attention of some women a few rows away. "Hey!" the young man called to them. "Hey!" They ignored him. Trying another tack, he pulled a few small bills from his pocket and fingered them so the women could see.

Jim tapped him on the shoulder. "Like this," he instructed. He pulled a \$100 bill out of his pocket. He licked it. He stuck it on his forehead.

By 11:00 the next morning, Jim and Gary were in their suits and ties and ready to go. Jim was reclining on a bed in their hotel room watching *The Price Is Right* while Gary used the phone, attempting to reach Peter Dixon to find out what time he wanted to see them.

Dixon was in a meeting, and he had been in a meeting for a while. He had promised to call in the morning, and he hadn't done it.

A blond contestant on *The Price Is Right* guessed the price of a car wrong. She wasn't even close. Jim addressed her by the name on her name tag: "Dana, you dumb shit."

He turned to Gary: "Guess we already got our answer." If Dixon didn't call, Loeb Partners obviously wasn't interested.

Gary walked to the window, which looked south. He could see the Empire State Building. Beyond it, on Wall Street, the fate of Lin-Tex was being decided.

"Peter," Gary called into the distance, "when is lunch?"

"Peter," he called again, "we can almost see the money from here."

The Price Is Right ended, and *Scrabble* came on. One of the clues was "Helps Dolly Parton keep her head above water." The answer turned out to be "Treading."

When the show was over, Gary dialed Dixon again, and this time he got through. "Yes," Gary said. "How are you? Okay... Okay... Okay..."

Jim looked out the window. "Peter," he called, "we're trying to see your cash from here." Then he spoke softly, mimicking what Dixon might be saying to Gary: "*There's no real need for you boys to come over and see us today. I don't think we're going to make a deal.*"

On the phone, however, Gary was saying, "Okay... Okay... Super... All right... How about this? I'm going to be in all next week. You can reach me anytime in Austin... To make sure I'm not reading anything into this, you feel there's room for some additional talk, but you think there's a proposal that can satisfy our needs and your needs too... Right... Right..."

Super Password was on the TV now. Two of the clues were "Attractive" and "Kennedy."

"Caroline," Jim said. He was wrong.

"If you want to call him, fine," Gary was saying to Dixon. "He knows the business overall very well and can give you a good overview of the comics industry. He knows a lot of people and deals with important people."

"Don't oversell," Jim muttered.

Two more clues were up on *Super Password*: "News" and "Schwarzenegger."

"Maria Shriver," Jim said. Correct.

Gary hung up. "Well," he said, "we don't need to meet today. He said they liked us both very much, felt we were sincere, honest. Tons of companies come through there, and they found our company very impressive. What they'd like to do now is start formulating a plan to sell to their investors and their key people. Peter said Kempner was so enthusiastic he started last night."

Jim turned off the TV, and he and Gary looked at each other. They had one reservation: they'd been led to believe that either Dixon or Kempner could pull out his own checkbook and write a check for \$500,000. If they liked the deal so much, what was this stuff about consulting with investors?

But this certainly wasn't *bad* news. It might be the end of their troubles. Gary had said a few days earlier that he felt more and more tense "the closer we get to the home run. There's just one more step between now and financial Utopia."

Was Utopia at hand?

Gary looked out the window. "Thanks, Peter," he called. "I blew \$500 on this suit."

He picked up the phone and dialed Lin-Tex.

"It's a done deal," he reported, "if they don't come back and try to rip us off."

A week after Jim and Gary met with Loeb Partners, Gary flew to New York again and drove to Connecticut for a meeting with Waldenbooks—he walked out with a \$136,000 order. He picked up a phone in the reception area to call Peter Dixon and see what was happening.

Dixon had assured Jim and Gary that an offer would be coming soon, but none had yet arrived. Dixon had been doing some checking up on Lin-Tex. He'd called T-shirt retailers, syndicate licensing managers and a lawyer who represented several prominent cartoonists. All had spoken highly of Jim and Gary. Meanwhile, Dixon's secretary was washing and rewashing a Lin-Tex T-shirt—without bleach. It came out fine. Dixon was in a meeting when Gary called from Connecticut, but Gary reached him when he got back to his hotel in New York. The deal was just coming out of the typewriter, Dixon said. A messenger brought a deal memorandum to the hotel a couple of hours later.

Gary did not respond to Dixon immediately. He didn't want to discuss the offer until he understood it, and he didn't understand it. Also, he wanted to talk to Jim. But the next afternoon he figured he ought to give Dixon a call anyway. "Did you get our document?" Dixon's secretary asked anxiously.

"Yeah," Gary said, "but I had to spend the day in the New York Public Library looking up the Latin words in it." (Gary always enjoyed playing up what he referred to as his "hillbilly" background in conversations with the cultured Dixon. At one of their meetings, when Dixon took orders for lunch to be brought in by a Wall Street delicatessen, Gary requested "a Moon Pie and RC Cola.")

The secretary put Gary through to Dixon, who told him how excited Loeb Partners was about the prospect of investing in Lin-Tex Marketing.

"This looks like the beginning of a good relationship," Gary said.

"They don't come along very often," said Dixon, "so grab it."

"Let me go home and tell Jimmy," said Gary.

One of the first things Jim did when Gary told him was to call a friend and chant, in the schoolyard rhythm, "Nyah, nyah, nyah-nyah nyah, I've got half a million dollars and you-oo don't."

The deal Loeb offered was complex, but it boiled down to this: in exchange for a \$100,000 investment and a \$400,000 loan, Loeb would own 25 percent of Lin-Tex.

This offer was a little below what Jim and Gary had been seeking, and they did have other options. They had been invited to present their business plan at a venture-capital conference in Dallas at the end of August (but attending it would mean missing a golf tournament they wanted to play in). A member of the fast-sinking Austin banking community had said he wanted to lend Lin-Tex some money and asked Jim and Gary if they had any real estate they could put up as collateral. "Jesus Christ," Jim had said, "isn't that what's putting you fuckers into bankruptcy?" "Well, yeah," said the banker, "but we *understand* land loans."

After several days of stewing things over, Gary called Dixon and made a counteroffer.

Dixon laughed. "The only counteroffer," he said, "is no offer."

In that case, Gary said, the original offer sounded just fine.

And then nothing happened. Jim and Gary expected their \$500,000 to arrive in a matter of days; Dixon called to say the paperwork was taking a little longer than he had expected. So Jim and Gary waited, and then Jim took off on a long-scheduled driving trip with his wife, the baby and the dog in the Banana, the yellow Lin-Tex motor home.

of George Hamilton. Lev stopped in front of a large trophy. "Is this from the tournament you told us about?" he asked. At a previous meeting, Jim and Gary had described their victory in a golf tournament sponsored by a topless bar called Sugar's. The victory was sweet since participants were distracted by topless go-go dancers cruising the course serving beer and putting on spontaneous performances.

Touring the warehouse, Lev grabbed a shirt off a shelf. "Peter," he said, "this is just the shirt for you."

"Is it Beethoven?" asked Dixon.

It was a naked woman in the arms of an oilman. "I love it when you talk crude," she was saying.

Dixon took the shirt.

The meeting convened in the conference room. Gary removed the steer-horn centerpiece from the table, and all were seated: Jim, Gary, Dixon and the two sides' lawyers. For Loeb Partners, there was Lev, bearded and wearing a custom-made Alexander Julian suit (he was a personal friend of Julian's); among Lev's other clients was a sex magazine for which he negotiated columnists' contracts with Marilyn Chambers,

star of *Behind the Green Door*, and Seka, star of *Inside Seka*. For Lin-Tex, there was Hubert Gill, a smart Austin attorney who had argued before the Supreme Court of the United States and had also recently represented a woman who'd been stuck in a gas-station restroom for several minutes and sued the oil company for \$30,000 (she'd lost).

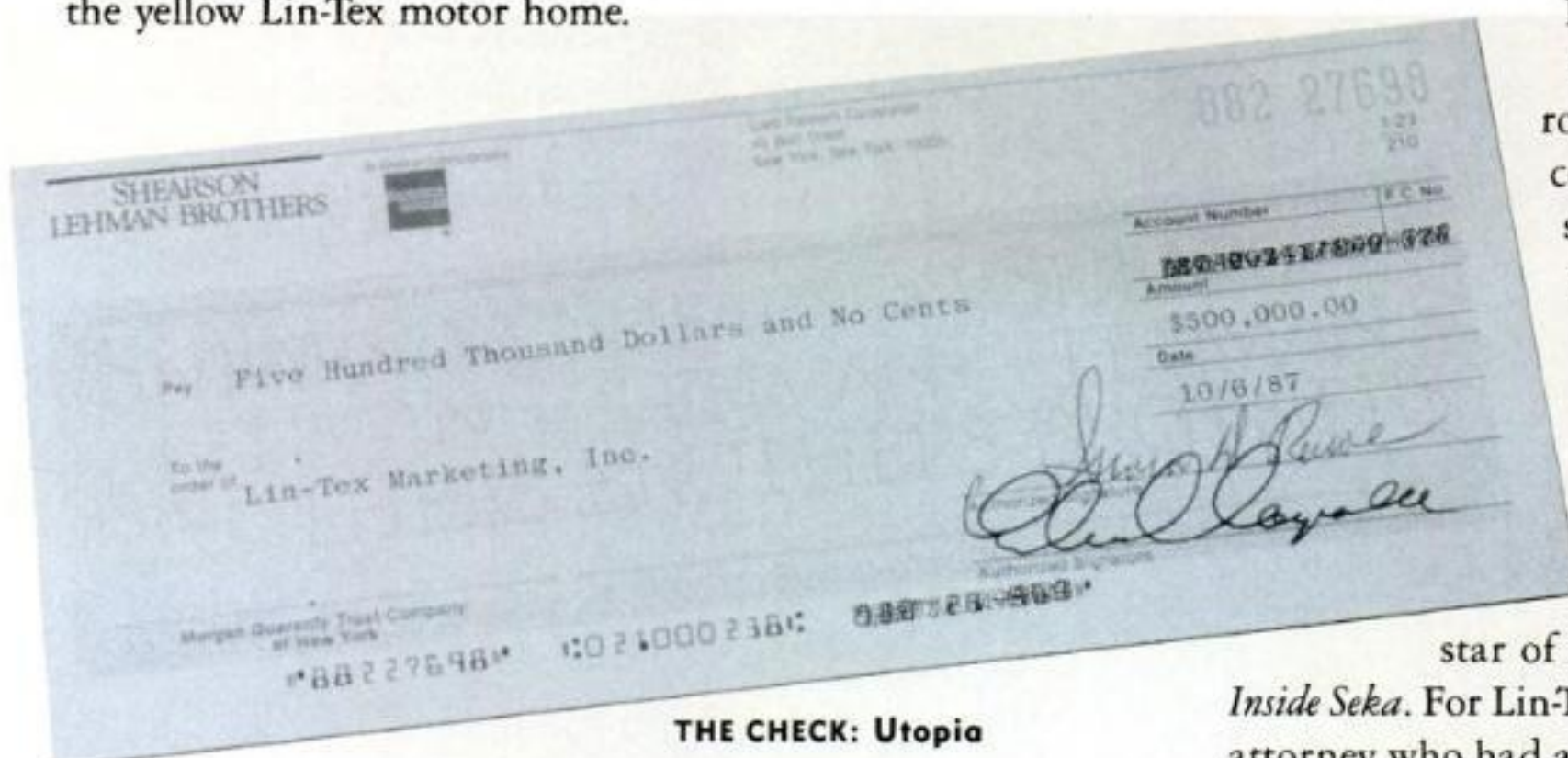
As the meeting began, most issues between Loeb and Lin-Tex had already been settled. Two weeks before, Gary and Gill had flown to New York to hash out minor points in the proposed contract that Jim and Gary had found objectionable, and Loeb Partners had made the adjustments. Also settled was the question of Jim and Gary's compensation: they would receive annual salaries of \$100,000 (an immediate \$22,000 raise), plus quarterly bonuses based on profits.

Two weeks had passed from that meeting in New York to this one in Austin, and Lin-Tex needed the money more than ever. The major issues outstanding had to do with Lin-Tex's balance sheet. They were addressed by Lin-Tex's accountant, a prim and efficient woman named Marcia. As Jim, bored, trimmed his cuticles, Marcia explained the complicated accounting history of Lin-Tex, finally coming to the key problem—the "loans" Jim and Gary had taken out of the company to supplement their salaries. Marcia reported that she had pored over old records for hours and concluded that Jim owed Lin-Tex \$64,361 and Gary owed \$94,927. Loeb Partners naturally wanted that money repaid.

"What do you want to do about it that won't wreak havoc with Jim and Gary's lives?" Lev asked Dixon.

"Our concern," Dixon replied, "is to make it as easy as possible for your company to grow without doing damage to the way you live. It's in your interest more than ours to get this cash back into the company."

Gary parried: "I think it's common knowledge that we both have about everything we own wrapped up in the company."



THE CHECK: Utopia

Waiting for the plane from New York to arrive, Jim and Gary had a drink at the Austin airport bar. They were nervous and excited; Gary was unusually pensive. "At this time tomorrow," he said to Jim, "we'll be drunk and real happy—" Jim finished the sentence: "—or drunk and real sad."

They walked out to the gate to meet Peter Dixon and the Loeb Partners attorney, Bruce Lev. Dixon walked off the plane wearing a pin-striped suit and carrying two enormous, boxy briefcases.

Somewhere inside them, Jim and Gary hoped, was half a million dollars.

They all rode to a hotel called La Mansion in Jim's Mercedes. "Do you want a drink?" Gary asked. Dixon and Lev declined. "There's a couple of topless clubs near here," Gary said. Dixon and Lev did not respond. They got out of the car and said goodnight.

The next morning, Jim waited at the Lin-Tex office for the meeting to begin. He had asked Gary if they should wear shorts today to show Dixon their usual, casual style. "Let's wear suits," Gary had suggested. Jim was wearing a suit.

It was almost noon when Gary arrived with Dixon and Lev from a preliminary meeting with Lin-Tex's lawyer. Gary led the New Yorkers into the office he shared with Jim and showed them the adjacent twin desks. "This way, after I've had a phone call, I don't have to repeat everything to him," Gary explained.

"A commendable idea," Dixon said. He perused the items hanging on the walls—Jim and Gary's Wendy's memorabilia, original artwork for comic strips, an autographed picture

Jim, still bored, interrupted. "I'm kind of a bottom-line guy," he said to Dixon. "What do you want to do?"

"I'm asking what *you* could do, what you'd be comfortable with."

"We could pay it on a quarterly basis," Gary said, "as we review our bonuses."

"We recognize that this is the only source of income you have," Dixon said.

"We pay back 50 percent of our bonuses," said Gary. "Is that fair?"

"If that's comfortable for you," Dixon said, "that's fine."

Jim sat up. "Okay!" he said. "It's a deal!"

"Shall we sign," asked Lev, "so we can go have lunch?"

The contract and supporting documents were passed around and signed. Then Gary called for Mitch Tucker, the Lin-Tex sales manager, to come in with his camera and record the moment.

"Why don't we get a shot of the check?" Jim asked.

"Oh," said Lev, pretending he had forgotten. "The check."

Three hours later, Dixon and Lev were on their way back to New York. Gary sat at his desk gazing at a photocopy of the check (the original was in the safe). Then he ordered up a limousine to take him and Jim and several of their male employees out to celebrate. At a country-music bar on the Sixth Street strip, Jim sent a drink to the singer, an Austin regular named Rusty Wier, who was performing his classic, "I Hear You Been Layin' My Old Lady." At a nearby sex shop, he bought Gary a package of "Recycled Condoms—For Cheap Fuckers." As the Lin-Tex party rode away from Sixth Street, Jim stood up through the limousine's sunroof and called out to two women in a car in the next lane until one of them stood up through their sunroof and shook hands with Jim as the cars sped down the street side by side.

At the Yellow Rose, however, Jim became engrossed in a conversation with the manager and paid no attention at all to the strippers, not even the plain-looking one who came over to the table and started out telling the guys how shy she was and ended up picking up their drink glasses with her breasts.

The next day Jim and Gary drove over to Lamar Savings.

"So you hit the home run," their banker said.

Gary showed him the check.

"I think I'd better touch that," said the banker.

"I'll let you touch it," Gary said, "but I'll hold on to the other side." And he did.

Twelve days after Lin-Tex Marketing signed its deal with Loeb Partners, the stock market crashed. Retailers, fearing a recession, cut back drastically on their Christmas orders. Lin-Tex had projected December sales of \$1-million; they were \$280,000. Dixon arranged for Loeb to lend Lin-Tex another \$500,000 for market-rate interest plus an additional 1 percent of the company. Lin-Tex repaid the \$500,000 loan from Loeb Partners two months ahead

of schedule, but as another Christmas arrived it borrowed \$500,000 again. Loeb took another 2 percent of the company.

Lin-Tex continued to grow. Sales approached \$6 million a year, but profits were skimpy. The money came in, and the money went out.

In the spring of 1989, Lin-Tex moved from its old office-warehouse suite to a 30,000-square-foot factory-warehouse-office-showroom facility on the south side of Austin. A big red sign on the side of the building identified it as the Lin-Tex Center.

The Lin-Tex Center housed the T-shirt business, a money-losing travel agency that Jim and Gary had bought and two new businesses they had established under the Lin-Tex umbrella—a copy-and-printing service, and a photo lab and studio. A dry-cleaning plant and catering service were on the drawing board. As the day of the grand-opening party neared, Gary hoped Peter Dixon would attend so Gary could describe to him in person his vision of a greater Lin-Tex ("I need a couple of million dollars to do it right"). Jim wasn't so sure inviting Dixon was a good idea, since one casualty of the latest cash-flow crisis was Lin-Tex's ability to repay the most recent \$500,000 loan from Loeb Partners. Under the circumstances, Jim said, "I can't imagine Peter Dixon being thrilled to come into our office and see our shower and monogrammed towels."

In May 1989, Lin-Tex Marketing obtained the T-shirt rights to the Soviet space program, and it borrowed \$1.15 million from an Austin bank for another bout of optimistic expansion. In February 1990 the bank grew nervous about the loan. Lin-Tex was still selling \$5 million worth of T-shirts a year, but it had debts of more than \$2 million and negligible profits. The bank seized the cash in the company's checking accounts. Jim and Gary responded the only way they could: Lin-Tex Marketing filed for bankruptcy and went out of business.

Today Gary Shuster is managing an oldies rock 'n' roll band. Jim Teal is unemployed, but he is working on a plan to open a government-subsidized mobile-home park for the homeless. Loeb Partners is involved in litigation with the bank that shut down Lin-Tex. And Peter Dixon is philosophical about his investment in the T-shirt business. "Out of every ten investments we make," he says, "two or three are great successes. Five are rather dull. One or two are failures. Lin-Tex happened to be one of those." ♣

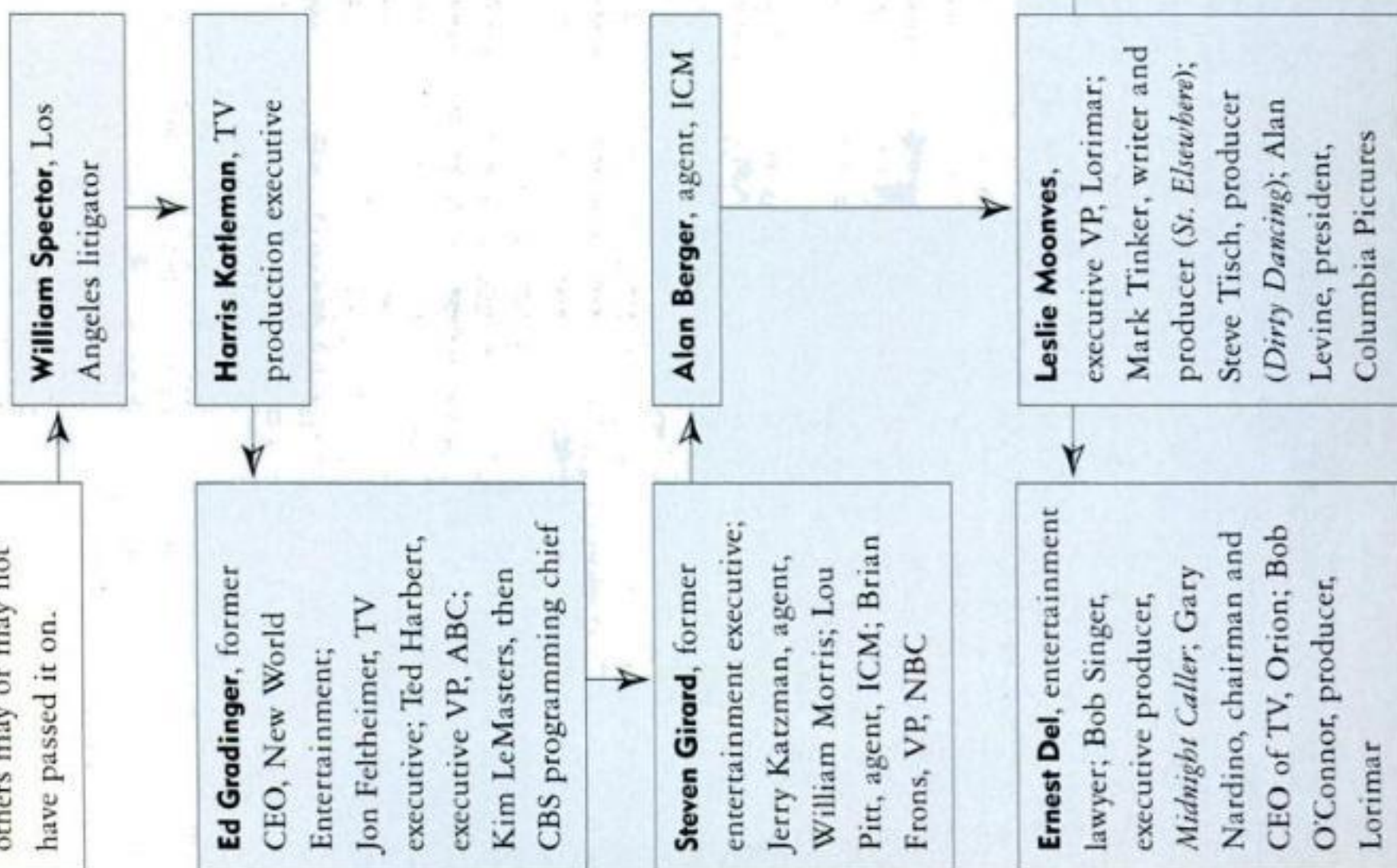
"At this time
tomorrow,"
Gary said to Jim,
"we'll be drunk
and real happy—"
Jim finished the
sentence:
"—or drunk and
real sad"



One by one, as the eighties rolled on, the small pleasures of lowbrow life were co-opted by the haute

bourgeoisie. **OF** Nachos, Rolling Rock, topiary hair, railroad flats in Clinton and surliness all became accessories of the well-to-do. Now comes news that the trend has reached a new pinnacle, as one of the last bastions of numb, credulous lower-middle-class escapism has been taken over by the affluent and powerful. During this past year, hundreds of the country's wealthiest, best-known and most influential citizens spent God knows how much of their time, or their assistants' time, mailing and messengering and faxing a goofy, pointless chain letter to one another.

How to Read the Chain:
Just follow the arrows. Those who we know continued the chain are in boldfaced type; the others may or may not have passed it on.



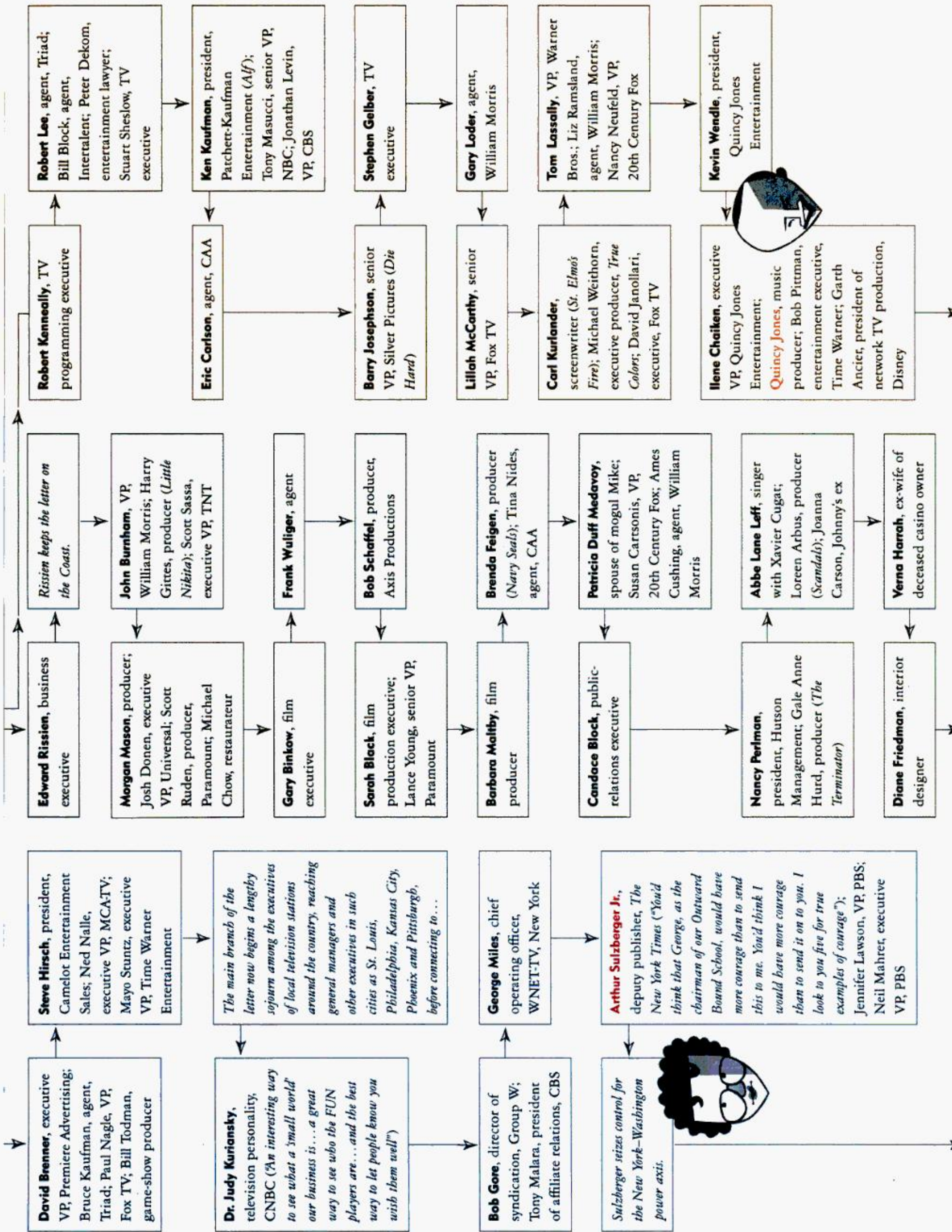
Here the connection becomes momentarily cloudy, but at least two people who received it from Moonves's recipients, Robert Kennedy and Edward Rissien, inaugurated branches of their own.

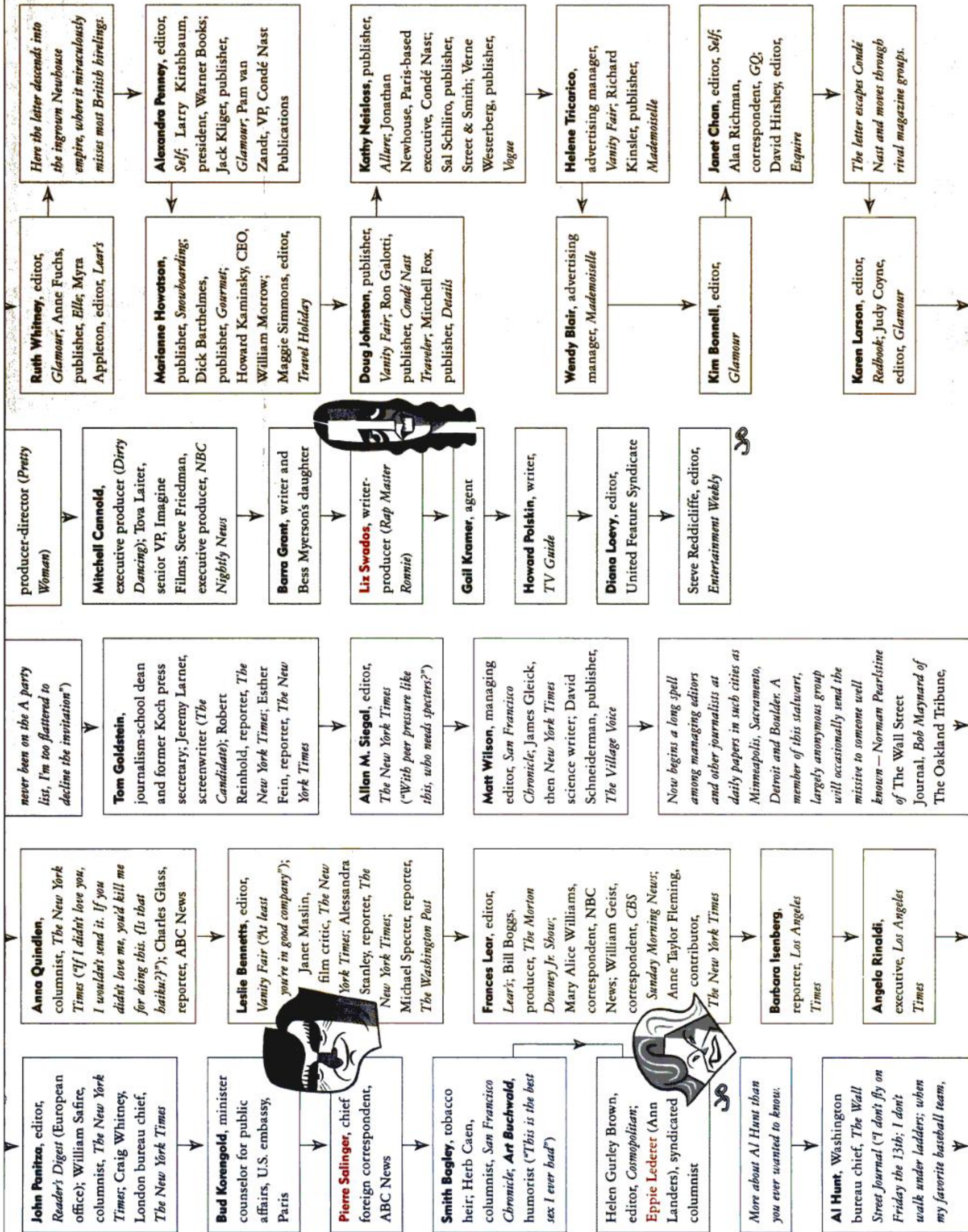
Join AIMÉE BELL and JOSH GILLETTE as They Unravel This Up-to-the-Second Map of the American Media Establishment

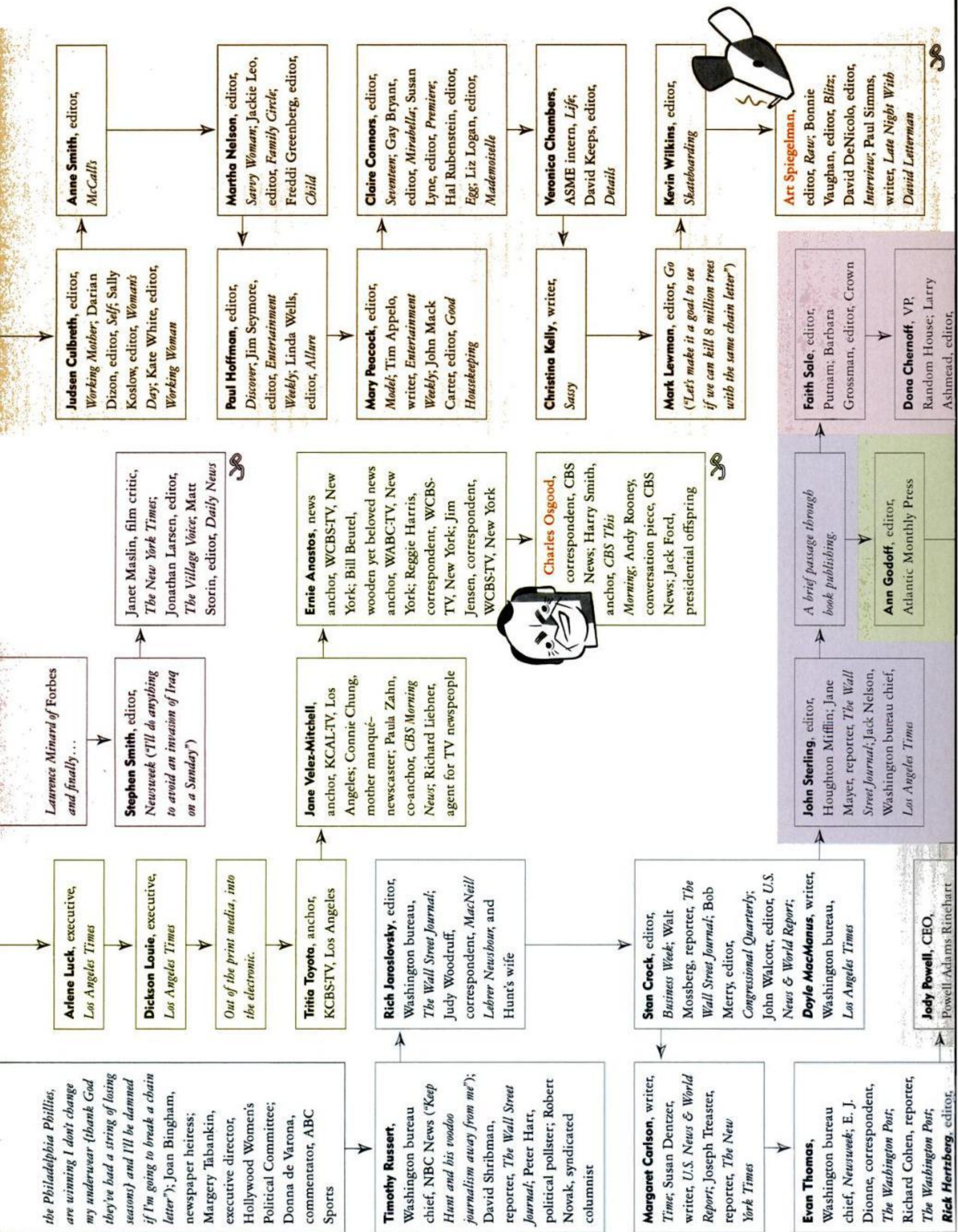
CHAIN

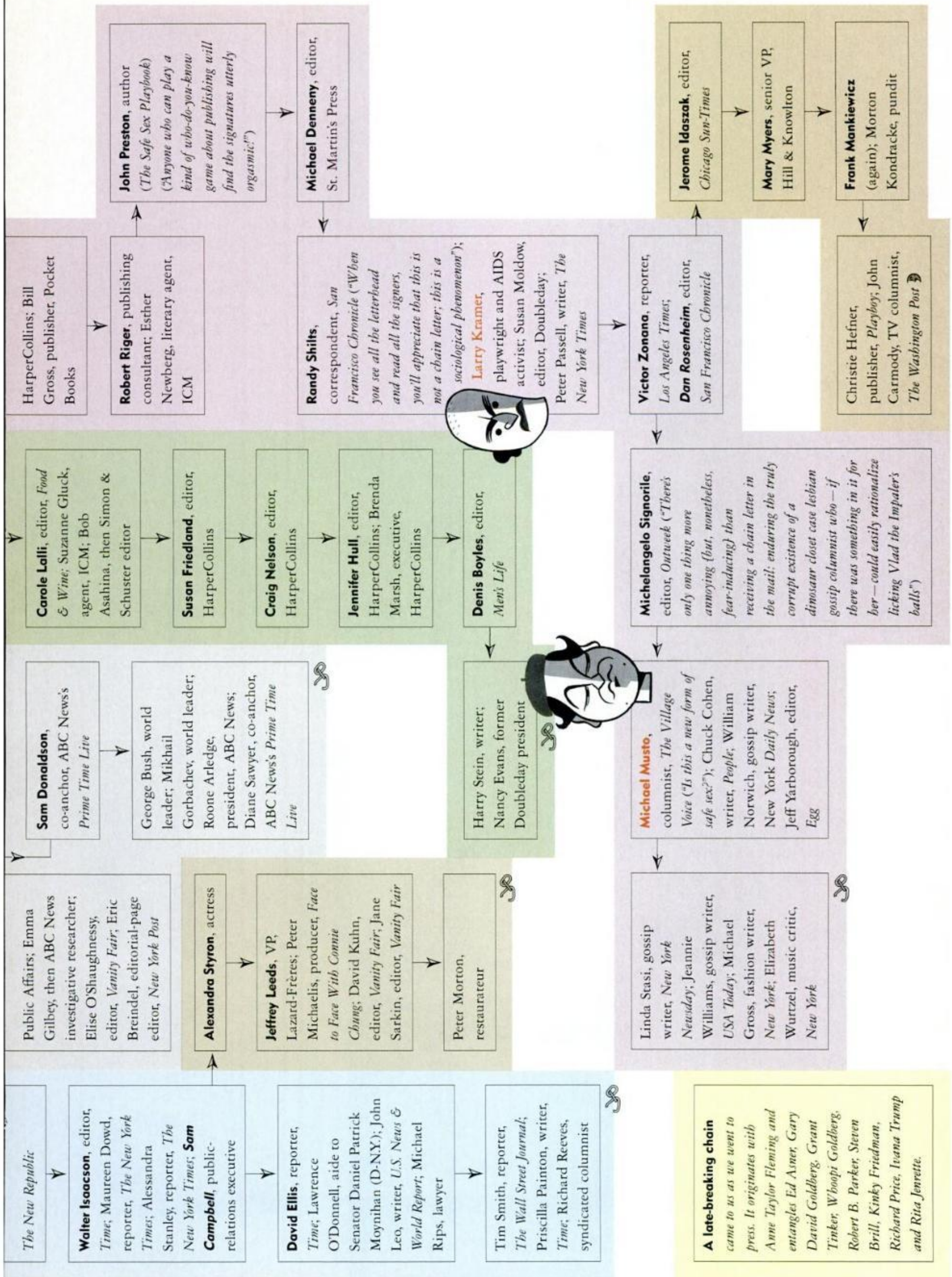
of foolishness

Over the years, there have been many attempts to generalize about the people who operate America's defining businesses—media, show business, image-making. We now offer ours: they are gullible people who believe in chain letters. During the last year, a chain letter was sent from one opinion-maker and media nabob to another. The letter was a goofy exhortation to play golf, combined with vague references to luck. What makes this chain letter unique is that its links were so pleased to be within one another's company, they dispensed with anonymity. Sometimes they even appended apologetic or semiwitty notes. The result is a sweeping diagram of the American media elite. Sure, some familiar names do not appear, but not because they did not receive the letter, or won't; the galaxy of names on the following pages is only part of an ever-expanding universe. (Discretion demanded that the names of SPY employees who received it be omitted.) The chart suggests questions: Who was trying to impress or amuse whom? What does it mean that Sally Quinn received the letter before Ben Bradlee? Did it portend romance that Rick Hertzberg, the *New Republic* editor, sent the letter to the former ABC News researcher Emma Gilbey? When Al Hunt of *The Wall Street Journal* faxed the letter to his *Capital Gang* nemesis, Robert Novak, was he hoping Novak would break the chain and sustain a string of bad luck? We don't know. Having discovered a unified theory of media relations, we're content to let other scientists analyze the evidence.









MUCH ADO

ABOUT ANYTHING

Bigthink, Pinterspeak, Kaelism

and Beach Boys baloney

BY HUMPHREY GREDDON

Richard Bernstein was once the Paris bureau chief of *The New York Times*, and the paper of record naturally believes this experience qualifies him for the role of culture critic and roving intellectual. Fortunately, he is living up to their expectations.

REVIEW OF REVIEWERS

Indeed, like any college student who has returned from a year in the city of Foucault and *les sandwiches* — a senior who walks around with a Gallimard paperback poking out of his pocket — Bernstein insists on thinking big, thinking long and thinking aloud.

In the Arts & Leisure section one Sunday, Bernstein was asking questions, big questions, about racial controversies in the arts: "Are these incidents mere bumps on the running graph of a pluralistic society that is inevitably in a state of constant flux? Or are they signs of more seismic stirrings?"

Exactly; what oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed. Stripping the language of its poetic ambiguity and passing over such interesting questions as what this "running graph" is supposed to be measuring and how it suddenly turns into a figurative seismograph (*seismic* being a graphy-type word), we can see that what Bernstein is really asking is "Are these incidents trivial or significant?" But, of course, the writer is having some fun at his readers' expense, for when the introduction of an eleven-column newspaper article raises such a question, it can have only one answer.

Magnificently shopworn, the title of this think piece — "The Arts Catch Up With a Society in Disarray" — deserves recognition. The arts seem to have been catching up with a society in disarray for a hundred years; would the news pages run the headline BISMARCK CALLS PARLEY? True, Bernstein cannot be held responsible for this, but we can blame him for interview-

ing people who express ideas of such obviousness that reading their quotes feels no different from simply staring into space. He thought it was important for us to know that "change is inevitable. It's not always comfortable, but it's inevitable," as the director of the Yale School of Drama observes. And Bernstein bids us hearken *New Republic* theater critic Robert Brustein, the former director of the drama school, who comments, "I think that there are a lot of lies being expressed in our society these days, or at least, the whole truth is not being expressed." A vision, or a waking dream?

Stephen Schiff was once the movie reviewer for the *Boston Phoenix*, and *Vanity Fair* naturally believes this experience qualifies him for the role of culture critic and roving intellectual. The magazine's "critic-at-large" recently explained Harold Pinter to its audience of housewife real estate brokers. Schiff wrote,

Kingsley Amis observed that when Pinter was in the room, people suddenly seemed to be talking like Pinter characters. And he was right. People do talk like Pinter characters, a great deal of the time.

We all like to bask in the reflected cleverness of a Kingsley Amis witticism, but we should probably first understand

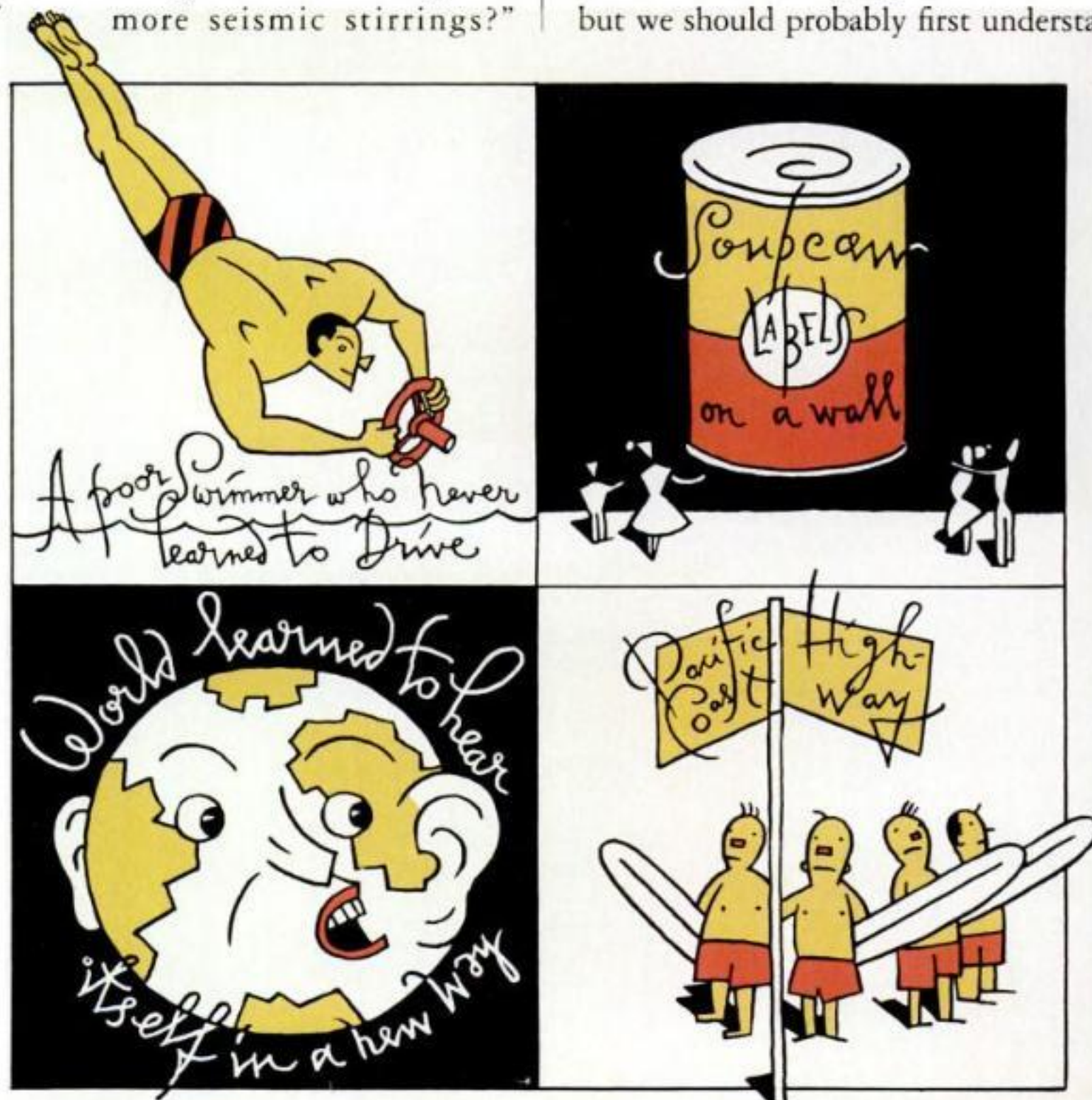


ILLUSTRATION BY STEVEN GUARNACCIA

it. Amis's point is that people *don't* talk like Pinter's characters naturally but when inspired by Pinter's presence will suddenly imitate them. You see, it is witty to observe that people are so impressionable and unconsciously eager to flatter that when the great writer is among them, they change the way they talk to suit him. If they talked that way all the time, Amis wouldn't have noticed a difference, now would he? (Of course, what Schiff may have meant is that people talk like Pinter characters a great deal of the time because Pinter is in the room a great deal of the time, and Pinter probably *is* in a room a great deal of the time, so maybe Schiff is right.)

While Amis makes a witty observation about the way life can imitate art, Schiff is fascinated by the extraordinary idea that *art imitates life*—or rather that art imitates life “a great deal of the time,” as he qualified it so courageously. He wants very badly to convince his readers of the similarity between Pinter's dialogue and ordinary conversation. Like Pinter's characters, real people

misunderstand, they fail to listen to each other, they toss non sequiturs around, and often they suddenly, inadvertently reveal everything they've been striving for hours—or weeks or years—to conceal: their lust, their malice, their greed, envy, hatred.

This passage may accurately reflect Schiff's experience with the staff at *Vanity Fair*, but it hardly describes the behavior of most of us most of the time. Schiff went on—and the strain of interpretation clearly began to tell on him—

Just as Pop artists put soup-can labels on a wall and we seemed to be seeing them for the first time, so Pinter put the twists and dodges of mid-twentieth-century conversation on the stage, and the world learned to hear itself in a new way.

If Schiff were a boxer, they'd have to stop the fight. Warhol's subjects were incredibly familiar, Pinter's were incredibly bizarre; thus, Schiff's analogy has one crucial flaw—it makes no sense.

Mid-twentieth-century conversation is the slightly desperate roundhouse affectation of someone who wants to appear capable of fine historical distinctions, as any critic-at-large ought to be. One

must at least wonder, though, where the 40-ish American critic acquired such familiarity with the 1950s speech of the English lower classes, if not from the plays of Harold Pinter.

Pinter's plays, Schiff says, “reflected the way people behaved in life.” This is sad. Schiff must so firmly believe “reflecting the way people behave in life” is the true test of a work of art that he is willing, in order to defend Pinter, to ignore his own abundant evidence that Pinter's plays are really weird. Schiff cannot imagine that being really weird would be all right. (Jesse Helms, at least, makes no pretense about his taste for paintings of horses and boats.) And what does Schiff say Pinter's plays are about? “A sense of chaos,” an “eternal present that is always on the verge of spinning out of whack.” Ah—the arts catch up with a society in disarray.

Writing on *Akira Kurosawa's Dreams* in *The New Yorker*, Terrence Rafferty stretches out in the best School of Kael manner: “Actually, he's doing something quite different: attempting to refine and abstract unconscious material to the point of absolute purity—the purity of ritual....The ecstatic pantheism of the opening episode....A real dream would end with the shutting of the gate, not with the redemptive rainbow.” (I know *my* dream would.) In more than a page of summaries of all the episodes of *Dreams*, Rafferty informs us that the film is “imperious” and “sermonizing” but Kurosawa is “a great maker of images.” In *New York*, David Denby, a Kaelite influenced by the School of Canby, complains the film is “moralistic” and betrays “boring-old-papaism” but acknowledges “the beauty of the images.” He gets all this across in a scant 300 words. But the champ is the genuinely likable Ralph Novak, School of Reed, writing in *People: Dreams*, he says, is “pedantic” and “ponderous” but has “magnificent images.” His review is half the length of Denby's. What is the lesson when upper-middlebrow, middlebrow and lower-middlebrow reviewers all say the same thing, and the last-named reviewer says it the pithiest? Read only Ralph Novak's reviews of Japanese art films, and use the time you save to learn Japanese.

As fall turns to winter, *Wigwag* is back, or at least somehow seasonally

appropriate, and no finer practitioner of wigwaggery may exist than *Newsday* music critic Tim Page. Only in *Wigwag* would someone declare, “Myself, I never bought the California myth (a poor swimmer who never learned to drive, I was pretty much excommunicated from the start).” A scaredy-cat who can't drive—the perfect *Wigwag* writer! In any case, Page's big scoop is the Japanese bootleg CD of the legendary, never-released Beach Boys album *Smile*. After telling us about a drive down the Pacific Coast Highway with his wife (fully licensed, we trust) and a visit to Brian Wilson's childhood home in Hawthorne and musing awhile about the California myth, Page finally gets around to *Smile*, “the most famous rock album never made.” Yes, we've often heard of it. *What's it like?* Not so fast, says Page. First let me explain that “*Smile*, the lost record, promised time and again but never released, has been the subject of lengthy articles, books, and much fantasy.” Tim, we're with you; *tell us about it!*

We don't want to rush into things, though, so he recaps the Beach Boys' “first few albums.” We are already one page into the article; this summary adds another two columns. Finally comes a paragraph that begins, “The Japanese bootleg...” and lists some of the tracks. And then we're off again for another two columns on the Beach Boys' career *after Smile*. But I thought...?

What we learn from all this, if we didn't already know it, is that Brian Wilson suffered a breakdown in 1966 or '67—about the time of *Smile*—and never fully recovered. Page has a melancholy concluding comment about it all:

But when I compare *Pet Sounds* and the *Smile* tracks to what came later, I experience many of the same emotions I felt that day in Hawthorne—desolation, awe and genuine regret that things turned out the way they did.

Yes, come to think of it, it is sort of, well, too darn bad that Brian Wilson went completely mad.

“My name is Simon...*John Simon*” Alert: Simon has now appeared in the fashion section in the back of *The New York Times Magazine*. He wore a shawl-collared dinner jacket by Gianfranco Ferré and a polka-dot silk bow tie and cummerbund. At Barneys New York. ☛

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WHY SPY?

—when you can make big \$ off

Hollywood?

BY ANNE WILLIAMSON



Collapsing even more quickly than our own, the Soviet economy is today awash with billions of worthless rubles and

THE
REDS

nearly as many schemes to convert them into dollars and deutsche marks. In fact, the Soviet economy has be-

come so lawless and rapacious that it has begun to rival Hollywood's. Thus it's only fitting that the filming in Moscow last winter of *The Russia House*, this season's big spy movie, created a major cash windfall for a sleazy international businessman who is—in real life—wanted by the U.S. government on charges of smuggling classified electronics.

Filming the first independently produced Western film in the backward USSR was no easy undertaking, even given *The Russia House's* class pedigree: based on the John le Carré novel, with a screenplay by Tom Stoppard; starring Sean Connery and Michelle Pfeiffer; directed and produced by Fred Schepisi (*Roxanne*). Owing to the lack of first-rate production facilities in Moscow, Schepisi and coproducer Paul Maslansky had to import equipment and principal crew members. But then the producers hit a lucky streak. Magically, the Oktyabrskaya, an elegant hotel ordinarily reserved for members of the Soviet Central Committee, became the Moscow headquarters for the Hollywood stars and bigwigs. (Meanwhile, at the more standard Rossiya Hotel, the crew's

accommodations had to be de-verminized personally by Maslansky and several assistants.) An unprecedented flexibility was granted the filmmakers, and the KGB didn't even get angry when the crew's walkie-talkies interfered with their own communications, choosing only to impose a small fine. Most important, Maslansky and Schepisi got around the restrictions covering Soviet workers at the state film studios by contracting a purchase-for-services deal with a newly formed Soviet studio called Corona Films, a German-Soviet co-venture.

According to people who worked on the film—we interviewed a number of them here and in Moscow—the reason for *The Russia House's* singular luck was one Babeck Seroush, a multinational wheeler-dealer who is the principal partner in Corona. Seroush, says Schepisi, “[provided] all our arrangements,” plus a highly favorable ruble-dollar exchange rate.

Asked about Seroush, Maslansky gushes, “He’s a terrific guy! He’s one of the great characters of all time.” Recalling a Sunday feast at Seroush’s dacha in honor of the film’s principals, Maslansky paints a sumptuous-for-the-Soviet-Union scene: “The dacha, I gotta tell you, is a major number. Indoor swimming pool, although not functioning, Jacuzzi, although not functioning, steam room, not functioning—but anyway, he’s a man of great taste and great style. He’s a Khashoggi type, but he’s even classier, in a way.”

Even classier than Khashoggi. Nevertheless, American justice takes a rather dim view of Seroush. In a 26-page indictment filed in 1984 in federal court in Manhattan, the government charges him with conspiring to smuggle thousands of controlled electronic parts—including microchips for nuclear-missile guidance systems—from the United States to North Korea, via Cologne and Moscow.

As it happens, that’s not the only part of the Seroush story that echoes Le Carré. Born in 1945 to Irani Communists, he was packed off as a child to Moscow for safekeeping. Raised in a Soviet “international house,” with time spent in East Germany, Seroush inexplicably managed to acquire West German citizenship, and at 25 he became the president of a Cologne-based export

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

Thomas L. Phillips Jr., Publisher

UN-BRITISH CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS

1. To "present an accounting" is to *bill*, and in *coo* we hear "coup." Will Americans be sorting out into patriots and slackers, as in World War II, or into hawks and doves, as during Vietnam? On radio talk shows, I have already heard the equivalent of "Let's turn North Vietnam into a parking lot": "Let's turn that desert over there into one green sheet of glass." (Why "green," I don't know. Maybe it sounds more ecology-conscious.) The closest I have heard on the radio to "One, two, three, four, we don't want your fucking war" is "We best try to live large and prosperous over here, and leave Saudi Arabia to the Arabians," which I like the ring of but which raises the question of whether we can in fact do both. Perhaps there will be some new division, between those who believe it is patriotic to run their big two-miles-to-the-gallon motorboats as much as they want to, by God, and those who prefer to burn their Texaco cards.

12. "Left" (what is left of it) is *L*. Plus *SOS* rearranged ("scrambled"). Our no-win situation in Vietnam was often described as a quagmire, in which we were bogged down. No chance of that in the desert. All that true grit over there, nothing but sand to kick in bullies' faces.

18. What we hear, after *ex*, or former, is *seed*, one meaning of which is semen, an old euphemism for which is *spunk*.

20. *Hortense* rearranged ("unsettled").

23. *Aid to Ga. in* rearranged ("mess of"). Santayana said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

29. To *understand* is to "get." Below is *under*, rise is *stand*. Last August the president suggested from Kennebunkport that he owed it to the recreation industry to keep up his hell-for-leather golfing and boating. He let it go without saying that we can't let the defense industry languish, at any time of the year. What we need in this country is a *sweet reason* industry that we can't afford to cut back on. One thing about an industry like that: it wouldn't depend on imports from the Middle East.

DOWN

4. *Yaw* up in *Doors*. Which is not to say that "Light My Fire" gets us anywhere in the

current crisis.

5. I wish I didn't have the feeling that when Bush talks about defending "our way of life," he means "the way of life of us oilmen."

8. *Greeting* was the traditional opening to a notice that the recipient had been chosen for military duty under Selective Service. Which is what we used to have in this country as an aid to young men who might otherwise have had too many options, which is what Americans in their twenties, of both sexes, are burdened with today. If the draft comes back, will women be included? We ought to make at least one thing clear to the Kuwaitis: if they want to be liberated, then they are going to have to accept the sight of women driving jeeps.

11. We first went to war (that's how we became us) for independence, which sounds like *independents*. If we go to war in the Middle East, of course, it will be to preserve dependence, on Arab oil. Times change.

14. I rented this movie the other night. John Wayne and Robert Montgomery piloting PT boats, Donna Reed nursing them and keeping a stiff upper lip.

21. Let me say this about America's standing in the Middle East: Back during the Carter administration we were the great Satan. Now we're playing catch-up to Saddam Hussein. Incidentally, I resent the fact that we now have a national enemy who has to be identified by two names. We haven't had to do that since Kaiser Bill. Either we should start calling this madman just Saddam, or we should insist that Iraqis refer to our leader as Herbert Walker Bush. See how they like that.

22. *War* plus *RN* (Royal Navy) around *E*. Warren Beatty was an outspoken opponent of the war in Vietnam, but as I write this he has not yet been quoted as having a position on Operation Desert Shield. Hard for him to say a whole lot after *Ishtar*. On the other hand, Bob Hope, an outspoken defender of the war in Vietnam, was in at least one desert movie, *Road to Morocco*, that I imagine did well. Where is Peter O'Toole? ☺



firm (with a branch office in Moscow) that supplied the Soviets with equipment for chemical plants.

Despite his close ties to the USSR, Seroush was eventually banned from Leonid Brezhnev's Soviet Union. Why this happened, no one who knows is saying. (A former business partner believes that Seroush was involved in a plot to smuggle art or antiques out of the country.) At any rate, a \$300,000 donation to the Chernobyl Fund in the late 1980s was the key that unlocked the golden door to the new Soviet Union for Seroush.

It was during his exile that the American smuggling indictment against Seroush was handed down. Even though the U.S. had an extradition treaty with West Germany, Bonn refused to fork Seroush over when an accomplice declined to incriminate him. The indictment and an arrest warrant are still outstanding, and Seroush has recently hired Nathan Dershowitz, Alan's brother, in an effort to quash them. "The U.S. prefers that fugitives return and face the courts," notes a prosecutor dryly.

Seroush's recent dealings in the USSR have been no less fishy. According to two stories published this year by the progressive weekly *Moscow News*, Seroush has misappropriated a number of almost-impossible-to-get loans from Soviet hard-currency reserves that were intended for his various German-Soviet joint ventures. The beauty of the *Russia House*-Corona Films deal was that Seroush was able to profit hugely by virtue of a simple exchange: dollars in from Hollywood, nearly worthless rubles out to Corona employees (three times their normal wages, but who cares?) working on the American production—which is almost as lucrative as bringing Monopoly money to your bank and taking away silver. Furthermore, Corona has Soviet-bloc distribution rights to *The Russia House*, which should further fill the studio's coffers.

Informed that he has helped enrich a man charged with attempting to subvert America's national defense, producer Maslansky puts the best face on the situation. "Hey!" he says, tossing off an idea: "James Bond playing this guy [i.e., Sean Connery as Seroush]—I mean, there's all that kind of irony involved." ☺

IT ONLY
GETS

WORSE

*You think the S&Ls are bad
news? Wait until you find out about
the next several trillion
dollars you're on the hook for*

BY EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN



Chase Manhattan, once David Rockefeller's pride of capitalism and the second-largest bank in America, discovered this September

THE
BIG
PICTURE

that it could borrow money only if it paid the junk-bond rate of more than 13 percent.

Why? Because Chase's assets consist mainly of uncollectible loans to Third World countries, real estate loans for which the value of the collateral falls each day, and loans to marginally solvent financiers like Donald Trump. And because Chase has lost nearly \$1-billion this year.

The portfolios of the other big banks are not much better. The bank mess might seem like just another business glitch in this triumphant, end-of-history phase of America, except that there are government-insured deposits totaling \$1.8 trillion in the nation's commercial banks, of which Chase is one of the most stable. This is almost twice as much as what America's savings-and-loans were insured for. In theory, the insurer of these commercial-bank funds is the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), but it has been drained of almost all its assets over the past three years by the failure of more than 500 banks. Given its present reserves, the

FDIC can now cover less than a penny of every dollar of insured funds. And right now some 48 banks, with \$43 billion in assets, no longer have sufficient funds to satisfy their mandated capital requirements. By December, it is estimated, the fund will have less than half a cent for every dollar insured.

The problem here is the same as it is with the S&Ls: the commercial banks, even the biggest, blue-chippiest ones, are no less junky than their portfolios of "assets." What happens when the U.S. finally, officially goes into a deep recession and these banks begin to fail like the S&Ls? As in the dreary case of the S&Ls, the taxpayer is the insurer of last resort. But with nearly \$2 trillion in deposits exposed, a bailout of the commercial banks could make the \$500 billion S&L bailout seem like a pittance.

The government's nonchalance about this impending multitrillion-dollar shortfall follows a familiar pattern. Consider how Washington worked to keep the S&L crisis submerged from public view for almost a decade—and thereby exacerbated its cost. For all practical purposes, the S&L default began in the late 1970s. These pseudo-banks were in the business of lending money to homeowners in the form of 30-year mortgages at fixed rates of interest. In turn, the S&Ls got their money by essentially borrowing from their depositors at variable rates of interest. The S&Ls made money on the interest-rate spread between what they borrowed at and lent at.

The government, through its S&L insurance agency (FSLIC), guaranteed that despite the obvious risks involved in the interest-rate roller-coaster ride, the S&L depositors would not lose money. So when the market savings rates shot from 8 percent to 24 percent in the late 1970s, the S&Ls became an endangered species. Since the insurance fund couldn't cover the projected losses, the choice was between forcing the S&Ls to recognize these losses—which would have led a large number of them to go belly-up during the prosperous, happy-go-lucky Reagan era—or camouflaging the losses with accounting sleight of hand.

Aided and abetted by a Congress that had effectively become an S&L lobby, the Reagan administration chose

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the cover-up. The government thus changed the accounting rules so that when a healthy S&L bought a dying one, the purchaser could transform the loss from the weaker S&L into a paper asset misleadingly called goodwill. For example, when a robust S&L overpaid \$100 million for a bad S&L (that is, \$100 million more than the market value of its loans), it created a fake asset for itself of \$100 million in goodwill—against which it could then go out and borrow real money. For its part, Congress expanded federal insurance from \$40,000 to \$100,000 per account and loosened up regulations so that the conglomerated S&Ls, with all that snowballing “goodwill,” could go out and speculate in dicey real estate ventures. As late as 1987, still keeping the dimensions of the losses secret, the S&Ls claimed they needed only \$5 billion to bail themselves out. By 1989 the estimated cost of the bailout had risen to \$90 billion; by January 1990, to \$197 billion; by May, to \$500 billion. And now, according to an analysis in the *Stanford Law & Policy Review*, the defunct S&Ls will eventually cost taxpayers \$1.37 trillion—a figure that exceeds the deposits the government insured by almost half.

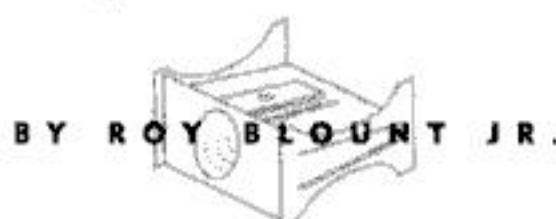
And insured bank deposits are just the tip of the federal-insurance iceberg. Washington, through a host of off-the-book gimmicks, hidden subsidies and government-sponsored “enterprises” (with all-American-sounding pet names like Ginnie Mae, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, Farmer Mac and Sallie Mae), has insured trillions of dollars’ worth of employee pension plans, farms, veterans’ perks, rural electricity bonds and much, much more.

The breakdown of the American taxpayers’ exposure, according to the Heritage Foundation’s background paper No. 774, is as follows: insurance on S&L deposits (\$958.9 billion), commercial-bank deposits (\$1.806 trillion) and credit-union deposits (\$161 billion); guarantees for veteran, farmer and student loans, pension plans and so on (\$1.32 trillion); loans for rural telephone exchanges, college dorms, small businesses and the Export-Import Bank (\$207 billion); flood and other government insurance (\$500 billion). Total exposure to the taxpayer: \$5.8 trillion. 

IS MEOW

DUMBER THAN WAR?

On global TV, that is



BY ROY BLOUNT JR.

One thing about a crossword puzzle—it has a peaceful solution. Which makes it sound like just the kind of irrelevant

candy-ass thing a person such as I, who am from the same state as Jimmy Carter, would believe in.

Carter mediated a peace settlement in the Middle East without using any troops at all. And he pushed through oil-conservation programs. It is generally understood that Carter lacked Reagan’s and Bush’s understanding of the American soul. We don’t scrimp and placate, we consume and kick ass.

Carter called energy conservation the “moral equivalent of war.” Critics observed that this formed the acronym MEOW. So I don’t apologize for resorting to a crossword puzzle.

Hey, okay, I daresay that a major power *does* have to make it clear it’s willing to throw flesh and blood and lethal firepower at a problem in order to be taken seriously. But I’m not sure how quaint that moral-equivalent-of-war notion is.

Okay, set *moral* aside awhile (though, by the way, I suspect the Carter people had a more sophisticated sense of this than the Reagan and Bush people, but never mind)—what seems moral to us may not seem moral to Them, whoever They may be, and morality in practice is never pure, and you can’t have right (at *any* level) without some kind of might.

But in fact, what have the U.S. and other nations been messily but intently engaged in improvising over the last

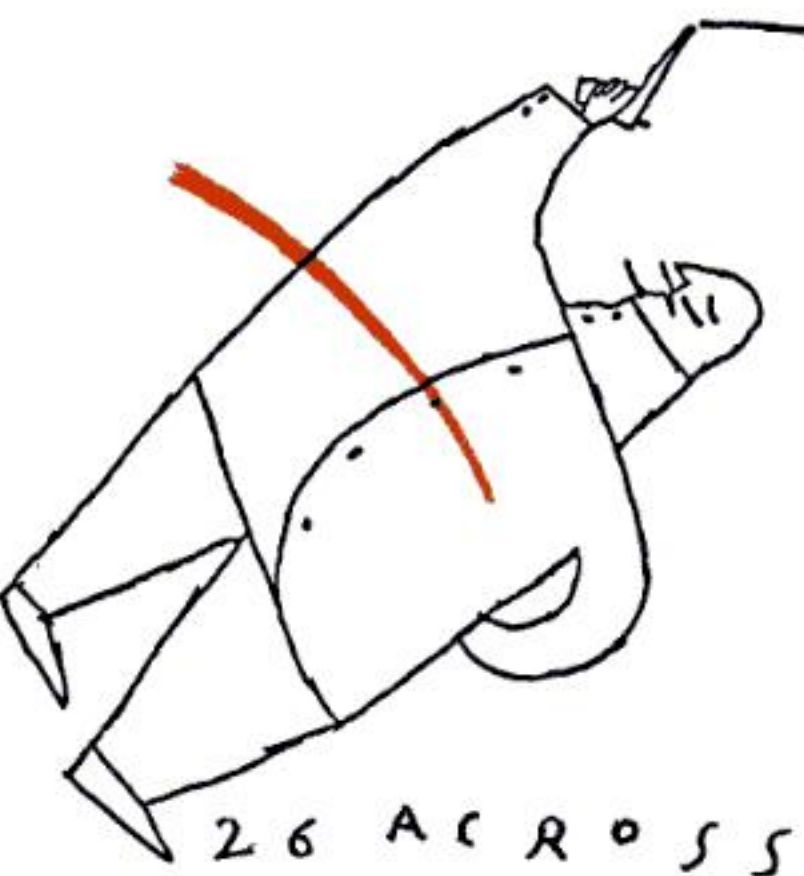
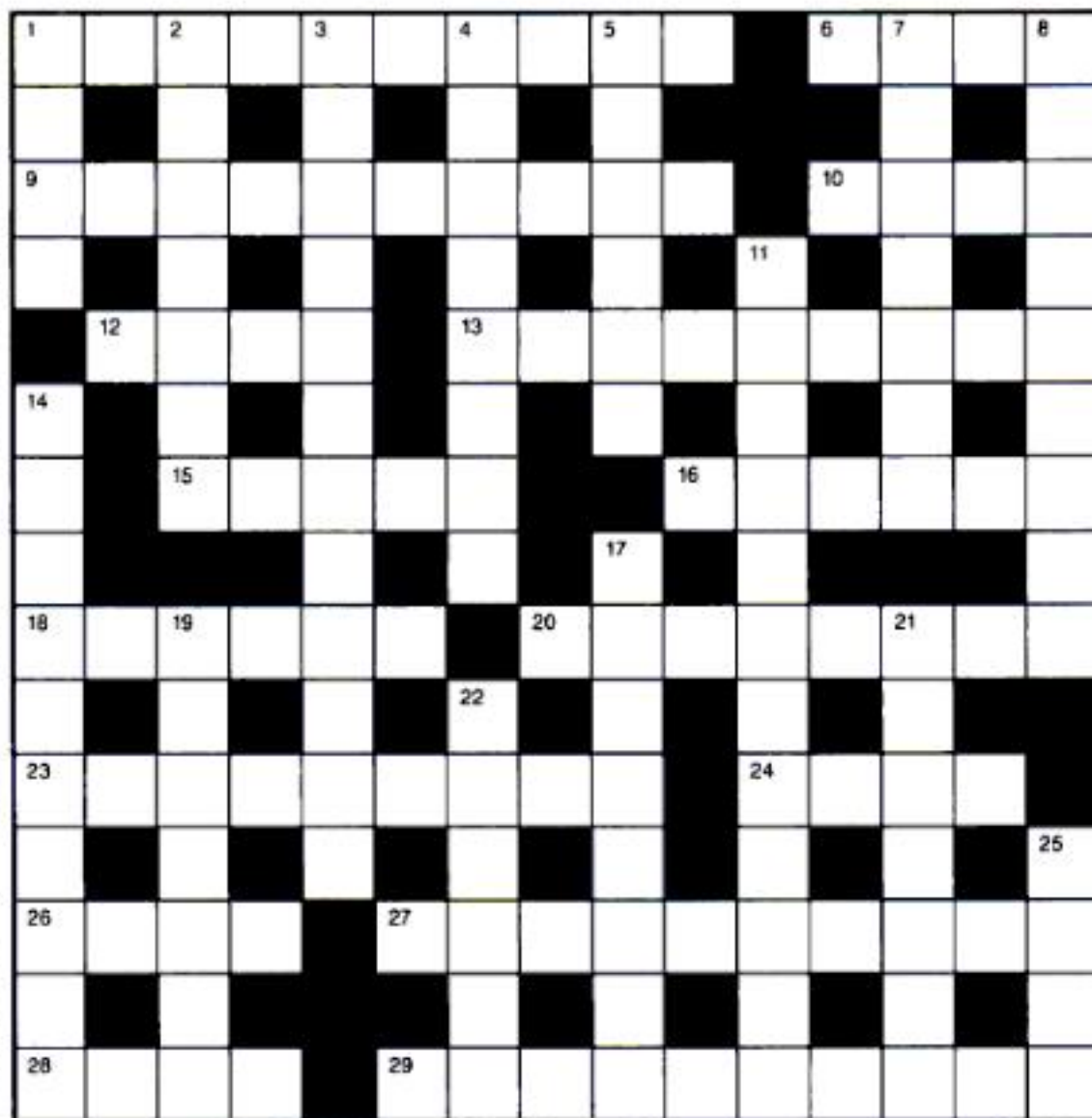
few decades, if not equivalents to outright war?

War gets people's attention; you have to give it that. People get into war. On the other hand, all-out war today... End of the world, so forth and so on.

So. Surgical strikes? With bombs and missiles for scalpels? Medieval surgery, maybe.

But hostage crises! Hostage crises are a *great* improvement over war. Horrible for the few people physically involved, granted, but they *are* few, and we *know* their names,

and often they are *interviewed on television*, and they actually get home, often. And when they get home, they tend to say things like "Listen, those people who kidnapped me, they were brutal to me, but they have a point." Whereas in war, thousands of anonymous people get blown to even-more-anonymous bits, taking a dune or something. If atrocities are what it takes to get people's atten-



tion, then let's have atrocities compromised by public relations.

Maybe this Arabian thing we're involved in now is just a new, improved, expanded, hairier hostage crisis. I wish I had more faith that Bush understands what the world, in its desperation, is trying to work out here, and what the U.S. can contribute. We are good at devising new mixes. This is a country that invented product liability and jazz.

We also created the Cable News Network. I am told that CNN writers have recently been reminded to refer to American boys and girls in the Gulf as "U.S. forces," not as "our forces." Because, as people used to chant back during the antiwar movement, the whole world is watching.

After the Christian Crusaders took Jerusalem by storm in 1099, an interviewer with a global audience might have said to Godfrey of Bouillon, "You have declined the throne of Jerusalem because, as you put it, you did not want to wear a gold crown in a city where your Savior once wore a crown of thorns. Doesn't that sentiment ring a bit false, inasmuch as your troops have just pitilessly butchered some 10,000 of Jerusalem's Jewish and Muslim men, women and children?"

No such interview was feasible in 1099, though—CNN wasn't started until 1980—and the Crusades went on viciously for centuries. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Thirteenth-century theologians held that conversion could not be forced, but most agreed that force could legitimately be used to preserve a situation in which peaceful propaganda was possible, and they continued to support the Crusade. Furthermore, Europe's fear of Muslim power was such that the Crusade idea persisted well into the 17th century, and the conviction that, in certain circumstances, war might be just became more deeply enrooted in the conscience of the West."

ACROSS

.....

1. What birds of peace do: present an accounting and an overthrowing, we hear. (4,3,3)
6. Butch deer makes old-fashioned guns retreat. (4)
9. Utopia confuses warm old Red. (5,5)
10. "_____ love, not war" — old saying. (4)
12. Defeat left scrambled distress signal. (4)
13. Tiny person in armor Tuesday after dark. (9)
15. Loud *no* is Yemen's opener. (5)
16. What may be learned is not so much before negative answer returns. (6)
18. Surpass former spunk, we hear. (6)
20. Hortense unsettled by answers she got when she asked trio of wise people if they knew why we were involved in a pissing match with Saddam Hussein. (5,3)
23. Mess of aid to Georgia in what we are condemned to do if we don't remember the past. (2,2,5)
24. Someone to take out Middle East staple. (4)
26. Lost essential fluid as part of honorable discharge. (4)
27. Toady has forehead 'n' honker, right? (10)
28. Nose out of joint for ages. (4)

29. Get below and rise. (10)

DOWN

.....

1. Corpse in trunk. (4)
2. "And the leopard shall _____ with the kid" — old expression. (3,4)
3. Army takes in a deistic (sort of) holiday. (9,3)
4. Openings turn up in sixties group. (8)
5. Makings of ill omen: losing 50 petroleum executives. (6)
7. Unusually great as mob disperser. (4,3)
8. Howdy-dos that used to make guys feel a draft. (9)
11. What we first went to war for — say, movie producers not associated with big studios. (12)
14. *They Were _____*: John Ford fighting WWII with John Wayne and others who could be spared. (10)
17. What I am after a make-over: mad wet hen and, after all, me. (3,3,2)
19. Illegal action before an earlier war. (7)
21. Inverted devil, to laugh at heroine of *War and Peace*! (7)
22. Armed conflict — British fleet surrounding East — solved by Dick Tracy. (6)
25. Unrefined oil without energy is dreck. (4)

Answers appear on page 84.



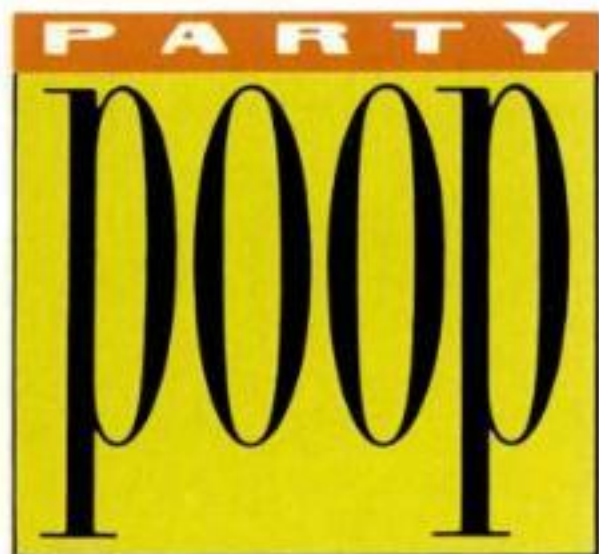
HEADLIGHTS Three new proponents of the very exciting, very 1990s fashion

for iridescent breasts: spunky, overaccessorized hotel operator Ivana Trump, here with freeze-dried *Cosmo* girl Helen Gurley Brown; survivor-lalapalooza Sally Kirkland, here caught in a completely natural pose; and former *Wiseguy* actress Joan Severance.



Kenneth Jay Lane, fake-jewelry manufacturer to the stars, demonstrates how his dangling pearl earrings are particularly well suited to this fall's short, sleek hairstyles.

(1) At Harrods' annual storewide sale in London, proprietor Mohamed al-Fayed orders befuddled *Dynasty* star John Forsythe to hold a china soup tureen over his head. (2) Curiously, Forsythe obliges.



BACHELOR TIPS

Magazine publisher (*The Atlantic*, *U.S. News*) and tiny power guy Mort Zuckerman, in trademark overpressed jeans and elevator shoes, knows just how to dance with a woman who is not wearing a miniskirt or glamorous jewelry or lots of makeup: don't make eye contact with her, but continue scanning the room for prospective dance partners.



SEEING THE FUTURE Jilted top wife and roman à clef author-to-be Ivana Trump climbs aboard her limo, having just eaten lunch with her ancient doppelgänger, Eva Gabor.



At the Hard Rock Cafe, reanimated sixties vestige Peter Max gives an aspiring artist a quick lesson in figure drawing.

WORD PROBLEM At a ballet benefit, Billy Norwich, the *Daily News's* junior-varsity gossip columnist, hovers peculiarly close behind thug-gish attorney and would-be rock star Richard Golub and party girl Bianca Jagger. Is Norwich (a) exhibiting the classic bald person's fixation with examining a standard, hair-covered scalp, or (b) just doing his job?





LOST IN A WORLD WITHOUT HANDLERS At *Financial World's* CEO of the Year dinner at the Grand Hyatt, former president Ronald Reagan

tries not to break into tears as he is piloted to the dais to speak.

TIED UP Eternally youthful fashion designer Mary McFadden models a garment (with the help of a designer named Emo Pandelli) that she actually claims is a bridal gown. The dress was unveiled at an exclusive and extremely classy publicity event in Southampton attended by such famously



reclusive luminaries as Patty Hearst and Kurt Vonnegut.

SAY "CHEESEBALL" Amateur pharmacist Nikki Haskell in a pose she assumes dozens and dozens of times each week.

Cindy Adams, the *New York Post's* second-string gossip columnist and frequent despot mouthpiece, looks for important sources at Le Club, sporting her own gift-wrap-based version of the Bardot-inspired piled-high hairstyle.



At a dinner sponsored by PEN, the literary organization whose members socialite and former sugar mommy Gayfryd Steinberg forced regularly into rented tuxedos, guy's guy and novelist Richard Ford introduces publisher Jeff Stone to his imaginary friend Pokey.



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industries, Imelda Marcos joins her dentist and his wife in an impromptu postlunch conga line on their way out of Le Cirque.



HOT! HOT! HOT! What could be better than *two* Lee Majorses (I and II!), *two* manly tank tops, *four* biceps and a swanky golf cart at a Mexican "celebrity" sports invitational? Dudes!



And at the opening of the first major retrospective of the Sylvester Stallone oeuvre at a Beverly Hills art gallery, the artist models a shirt in a coordinating textured fabric (paintings—starting at \$10,000—sold separately). Stallone's son Sage, who co-stars with him in *Rocky V*, pretends to be unembarrassed.

THE SPY INDEX DECEMBER

Amis, Kingsley, 80
Architectural Digest, 69
 as forum for name-dropping, 34
Arnold, Marty, 48
Asahino, Bob, 79
 as overpaying apologist for fictional mayhem, 43
Bacall, Lauren, 34
Bach, Richard
 as Playmates' favorite author, 36
Badham, John, 26
Baker, James
 having casual attitude toward German reunification, 10
Baker, Russell, 76
Berkowitz, David, 34
Bernstein, Carl
 single-mindedness of, 14
Bernstein, Richard
 beret-wearing, clove-smoking big thoughts of, 80
Boggs, Hale, 12
Bono, Sonny
 and desire for even higher office, 9
Bradlee, Ben, 74, 76
brand names, 26, 43
Brindley, Eric
 nothing about his current affair with fellow conservative Lally Weymouth, 79
Brinkley, Christie, 34
Brooks Brothers
 implicit savagery of logo of, 70
Brown, Helen Gurley, 77
 fossilized cleavage of, 88
Bruckheimer, Jerry, 44
Brustein, Robert, 80
Bryant, Gay, 78
Buchwald, Art
 moribund sex life of, 77
Bundy, Ted, 43
Bush, George, 79, 84, 86
 gnarled syntax of, 64-65
Cable News Network, 87
Callos, Maria, 30
Carter, Jimmy, 84, 86
 embarrassing self, 36
Chabad "L'Chaim - To Life!" Telethon, the, 19
Chambers, Marilyn, 72
Chase Manhattan
 as potentially insolvent, 85
Christo, 12
Chung, Connie, 78
Clay, Andrew Dice, 34
Connors, Claire, 78
Cop Rock, 10
Coppola, Francis Ford
 resembling gay Beat poet, 34
Costello, Elvis, 32
Cruise, Tom
 multimillion-dollar haggling of, 44
Daily News, 28, 76
Davis, Marty
 cagey ruthlessness of, 44
DeNicola, David, 78
Dern, Laura
 as interplanetary traveler, 30
Dickens, Charles
 contemporariness of, 60-65
 expressing aversion to spitting, 60
Diller, Barry, 76
Dinkins, David, 64-65
Dion
 hat of, 32
Dixon, Peter, 68-73
 using wife as test lab, 69
Donaldson, Sam, 79
Donovan
 as possible punching bag for Bob Dylan, 32
Dowd, Maureen
 Zeitgeist-riding of, 79
Duke, David, 9
Dylan, Bob, 32
Ellis, Bret Easton
 as apotheosis of ugly cynicism and depravity, 43

Evans, Nancy, 79
Fitzgerald, F. Scott, 25, 36
Forbes, Malcolm, 34
Ford, Richard
 and his invisible friend Pokey, 89
Forsythe, John
 apparently mistaking soup tureen for trophy, 88
Foucault, Michel
 as hallmark of Parisian pretension, 80
Fox, Michael J., 26
Fudgie the Whale
 alleged assault by, 59
Gabor, Eva, 88
Ganis, Sid
 as Hollywood victim, 44
Garagiola, Joe
 diseased prostate of, 46
Geffen, David, 76
 saying "I love you" to Michael Jackson, 10
Ginsberg, Allen, 34
Glover, Crispin
 as a cool-cantaloupe cat, 30
Godfrey of Bouillon, 87
Godoff, Ann, 78
Gorbachev, Mikhail, 79
Gottl, John, 65
Greenfield, Jeff
 as media walker, 48
Gumbel, Bryant, 30
Haddad, Bill, 76
Hannah, Daryl, 34
Haskell, Nikki
 squatting, 89
Hearst, Patty, 89
Hefner, Christie, 79
Helms, Jesse, 81
Helmsley, Leona, 65
Hertzberg, Rick, 78
Hesse, Hermann, 36
Hitler, Adolf, 30
Hoagland, Jim, 76
Hoge, Jim, 76
Holbrooke, Richard
 as secretary-of-State-in-waiting, 76
Hope, Bob, 84
Hussein, Saddam, 27, 30, 48, 84
 chant invoking, 10
 pissing match of, 87
Huston, Anjelica, 34
Jagger, Mick, 34
Joel, Billy, 34
Jones, Mick
 as statistic in Jann Wenner's body count, 34
Jones, Quincy, 75
Kalikow, Peter, 28
Kellor, Garrison
 as model vernacularist, 28
Kempner, Nan, 69
Kempner, Thomas, 66, 69-73
 as Spiderman fan, 69
 having premodern attitude toward T-shirts, 70
Kennedy, John F., 14
Kennedy, John Jr., 34
Khashoggi, Adnan
 classiness of impugned, 83
King, Martin Luther Jr., 14
Kirkland, Sally
 iridescent breasts of, 88
Kirkpatrick, David
 likened to bald chairman of upstart television network, 44
Koch, Ed, 65, 76
Korda, Michael, 43
Kramer, Larry, 79
Kravis, Henry, 63
Kuriansky, Judy
 epistolary chirpiness of, 75
Kurosawa, Akira
 as victim of Kaelistic reviews, 81
Kurtis, Bill
 as antithesis of chopped liver, 46
Lane, Kenneth Jay
 unconventional accessorizing of, 88

Lang, K. d., 30
Larsen, Jonathan, 78
Lasorda, Tommy
 and obscenity-spewing reaction to man in mascot suit, 57
Lebowitz, Fran, 30
Lederer, Eppie, 77
Lee, Spike
 and proposed adaptation of Kubrick classic, 30
Levine, Ellen, 76
Lilienfeld, "Frantic Fran," 19
Logan, Liz, 78
Los Angeles Times, 14, 20, 44, 77, 78, 79
Lynch, David
 meeting Laura Dern on Jupiter, 30
Lyne, Susan, 78
Madonna, 30
Majors, Lee, 89
Mancuso, Frank, 44
Maples, Marla, 12, 30
 purported realness of, 26
Mapplethorpe, Robert
 dirty but classical compositions of, 10
Marcos, Imelda, 25, 89
Martin, Steve, 34
Maslansky, Paul
 in partnership with sleazy multinational, 83-84
Maslin, Janet, 78
Max, Peter, 88
McCartney, Paul
 as control freak, 32
McClintock, Jack
 solipsistic writing of, 16
McFadden, Mary, 89
McNally, Brian, 34
Mercury, Freddie, 32
Michaelis, Peter, 79
Michaels, Lorne, 34
Miller, Judy, 48
Montana, Joe
 Helms-baiting pseudocommercial of, 26
Montgomery, Robert, 84
Moyers, Bill
 as industry dinosaur, 46
Moynihan, Daniel Patrick, 79
Mubarak, Hosni, 27
Murphy, Eddie
 egregious greed of, 44
Murray, Bill
 as wish-fulfilling fantasy object, 55
Murrow, Edward R., 46
Musto, Michael
 safe-sex musing of, 79
Nast, Thomas, 72
National Geographic, 10
Navratilova, Martina, 30
New Republic, 80
 possibly lusty editor of, 74
New York Times, The, 14, 44, 76-80
 imbroglia over article of, 48
 trite agrophilia of, 28

Newhouse, S. I.
 as dedicated to style, 26
Nightline, 10
Nixon, Richard, 12
Norville, Deborah
 and pending departure from *Today*, 46
Norwich, Billy, 79
 baboonlike scalp-watching of, 88
Novak, Ralph
 Cliff Notes-like reviews of, 81
Novak, Robert, 78
 consistent bad luck of, 74
Novak, William, 76
Ober, Eric "the Toad"
 obsequiousness of, 46
Ono, Yoko, 23-25
 recalling Miss Havisham, 63
Orbison, Roy
 void left by, 32
Osnos, Peter, 76
Oswald, Lee Harvey
 as scapegoat, 14
ostrich shoes and sexuality, 43, 68
O'Toole, Peter, 84
OutWeek, 22, 79
Page, Tim
 circumlocution of, 81
Pinter, Harold, 80-81
 debate over effect of his entering room, 81
Pittman, Bob, 75
Playboy, 79
 and Playmate statistics, 36
Plunkett, Jim
 (no mentions)
Powell, Jody, 78
psycho killers, 34, 43
Quayle, Dan
 as out of the American consciousness, 10
Quinn, Sally, 74
 odd mysticism of, 76
Rafferty, Terrence
 Kaelisms of, 81
Rand, Ayn
 as oft-cited Playmate favorite, 36
Ray, James Earl, 14
Reagan, Ronald, 89
 understanding U.S. soul, 86
Reed, Donna
 filmic fortitude of, 84
Reeves, Richard, 79
Roberts, Julia
 getting her break in a bear suit, 34
Roehm, Carolyne
 decorated bosom of, 63
Rooney, Andy, 78
Rosen, Richard, 76
Rubenstein, Hal, 78
Russia House, The, 83
 hard-currency-generating powers of, 84
Safire, William, 77
Salaam, Yusef
 hip-hop apologia of, 10
Sand, Barry
 and John Lennon-like devotion to girlfriend, 23-25
Santanayana, George, 84
Sawyer, Diane, 79
Schiff, Steven
 senseless analogy of, 81
Seigal, Allan, 77
Seroush, Babeck, 83-84
Sharpton, Al, 65
Shawn, William
 favoring "yock," 40
Shriver, Maria
 as answer to question on *Super Password*, 71
Shultz, George, 34
Shuster, Gary, 66-73
 and intercourse with TV, 70-71
 hillbilly pose of, 71
Siegal, Peggy
 as Cruella de Ville, 44

Signorile, Michelangelo
 and intriguing reference to "lesbian gossip columnist," 79
 self-professed pugilism of, 22
Silverman, Gayle
 as Barry Sand's Yoko, 23-25
Simon, John
 foppiness of, 81
Simpson, Don, 44
Sinatra, Frank
 birthday of, 28
Smith, Liz
 continuing self-obsession of, 30
Snyder, Dick, 48
Souter, David
 as similar to Nazi, 34
 quietness of, 10
Spiegelman, Art, 78
Spilane, Tom "Mickey," 52
Spock, Mr., 25
Stallone, Sylvester
 embarrassed teenage son of, 89
 prolific litigiousness of, 26-34
Stanley, Alessandra, 20
 as chain-letter recipient, 79
Steinberg, Gayfryd, 89
Steinberg, Saul
 resembling Weekford Squeers Jr., 63
Steinbrunner, George, 65
 misanthropy of, 53
Stigwood, Robert, 34
Stoppard, Tom, 10
Strummer, Joe, 32
Sulzberger, Arthur Jr.
 confessing to cowardice, 75
Sununu, John
 as bully, 27
Teal, Jim, 66-73
 as ignorant of Greek mythology, 70
Thicke, Alan
 as emblem of media-related deterioration, 34
Toback, James
 skirt chasing of, 17
Trump, Donald, 30, 64
 as banking-asset drain, 85
 as revisionist Dickensian character, 65
 continued innumeracy of, 9
 syrupy homily of, 19
 thinking like an 18-year-old about women, 26
Trump, Ivana, 26, 30, 69, 79, 88
 impressive leg-lift of, 64
U.S. Air Force, 40
 having lax attitude on interplanetary defense, 9
Urban, Amanda "Binky," 43, 76
Vinocur, John, 76
Vonnegut, Kurt, 89
Wall Street Journal, The, 10, 44, 74, 77-79
Walters, Barbara, 30
Warren Commission
 autographed photo of, 12
Washington Post, The, 20, 76, 77-79
 doubtful omniscience of, 14
Wayne, John, 84, 87
Wenner, Jann, 76
 as unselfconscious name-dropper, 34
White, Barry
 as possible Wilbury of Love, 32
White, Michael
 and indignant reference regarding supposed slight to faded actress, 20
Wigwag
 continued quaintness of, 81
Williams, Mary Alice, 77
Wilson, Brian
 tragic breakdown of, 81
Woods, James
 bizarre phobia of, 26
WPIX Yule log, the, 28, 62
Zuckerman, Mort
 scanning room for chicks, 88



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